

THE
TALE OF A MODERN
GENIUS V3
OR THE MISERIES OF PARNASSUS
(1827)



JOHN FITZGERALD PENNIE

KESSINGER LEGACY REPRINTS

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VOL. III. ✓

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THE
TALE OF A MODERN GENIUS;
OR,
THE MISERIES OF PARNASSUS.

LETTER LXXVI.

" Ah ! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep, where Fame's proud temple shines afar !
Ah ! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Hath felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with Fortune an eternal war ;
Checked by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frowns,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote hath pined alone,
Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown."

The Minstrel ; or, The Progress of Genius.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

I HAVE the felicity to inform you, that I have completed my projected poem in eleven books, at the end of two years' deep study, toil, and application; friendless, unnoticed, unassisted, and without ten useful books to consult. And now comes the trial. Will this poem obtain the

favour of the public? Shall I reap, after all my labours and sufferings, a golden harvest of renown, a glorious immortality; or will my daring presumption be considered, as some of my kind-hearted neighbours prophesy, an abortive attempt, unworthy notice or patronage, and deep eternal oblivion be the lot of the work and its unfortunate author? Surely great attempts, even when wholly unsuccessful, deserve some credit; and when the thousand difficulties and disadvantages with which I have had to contend are fairly brought into the account, contempt and derision will not, I trust, be cast upon me by the liberal and the learned: and I care for no other.

But I wish to make you acquainted with what has been passing, within the last few months. Having advanced as far as the ninth book of my poem, and my trifling legacy nearly exhausted, I began to consider it was high time to look out for a printer; and while trying to obtain a few subscribers in the town of D——, I called on Mr. C——, who proposed to undertake the work. But as I was a perfect stranger to him, and had no money to advance, or any security for payment except the subscribers' names, which would not cover half the expenses, he wished me to solicit

some gentleman in my neighbourhood to become responsible for the amount required. Heaven defend us! he might as well have desired me to ask them for half their estates! No, I would sooner perish, than submit to the mortification to which I should be exposed by such a request. I however told him that I would go so far as to desire a gentleman of the county, a man of family, and much spoken of for his liberality, to whom I had been known many years, to write a letter to him stating all he knew of my character. This appearing satisfactory, it was agreed that on the receipt of this gentleman's letter, the printing should commence immediately, and I left with him a considerable portion of the MS. Soon after, I waited on this benevolent man, and requested he would oblige me so far; when he very coolly replied, that I might depend on his complying with my desire.

After waiting several weeks, uncertain whether my work would be printed or not, I again set off to D——, half hoping, half despairing. But how great was my joy, when calling on the Rev. Mr. R. I found in his hand the proof sheets of the first book of my poem, which had been sent to him for his opinion and correction. Mr. C. had waited week after week for the expected testi-

monial ; but somehow or other it so happened, that the kind-hearted gentleman to whom I applied either totally forgot his promise, or afterwards considered it injurious to his dignity to let any one know that he was at all acquainted with so obscure an individual as myself. Be this as it may, Mr. C. ventured at last, on the strength of the subscribers' list, to commence printing the work.

Here I cannot but mark the gracious hand of an ever-watchful Providence. At this period my resources became totally exhausted, and I must have parted with every thing, and again fled my home ; while the publication of my poem, after all my toil and hopes, would have been completely annihilated. The Catholic schoolmaster of the village, by whom also the Protestant boys were educated, was dismissed from his situation for impropriety of conduct ; and on his quitting the place, I was requested to take three or four of the most respectable of the Protestant children under my care. I commenced a school with seven boys, which speedily increased to fifteen.

I have deferred the conclusion of my letter too long, but I waited for the satisfaction now afforded

me, of informing you that my poem has at length issued from the press. I am now engaged in the delivery of copies to my subscribers, which I find a matter of some labour. The Rev. Mr. R. who often earnestly pressed me by letter to quit the stage, and repeatedly addressed my friends on the subject, has kindly taken one copy of my poem, which is the utmost extent of his patronage. But how great is his liberality compared to that of some of my subscribers, who absolutely swore to my face, when I presented them with their copies, that they never subscribed to the work or even heard of it, though they gave me their names, and some of them positively set them down themselves on my list but a few months before ! "Why what a world is this !" No matter. Those honourable subscribers who chose to take their copies have received them, and I have paid my printer a certain sum : but still I am far from being happy. I have nearly four hundred copies remaining on my hands, no means of getting my work advertised, and a heavy debt to discharge. Not a single friend or patron has the publication of my work raised up : not a smile of approbation, not a line of congratulation, kindness, or encouragement have I received from one of my subscribers. One thing I have just learnt, which

revives my drooping hopes. Mr. C. has sent copies of my poem to all the principal reviews. Now these critics are men of high talent, correct judgment, and uncorrupt honour; totally disinterested and independent, superior to the influence of party spirit, to the vile and sordid power of bribery, and unwarped by local prejudices or narrow feelings of aristocratic pride and jealousy. They will, I rest assured, readily make every allowance for the numerous disadvantages against which I have so resolutely fought; they will, as the fearless and avowed patrons of genius and merit, bring forward my work to the world; and if in any degree I deserve the high meed of their approbation, nobly cheer me on in my arduous pursuits, promote my welfare by their powerful commendations, and thus introduce me from the desponding gloom of obscurity, into the heart-cheering sunshine of public favour.

I am, as ever,
Yours faithfully,
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXVII.

L—— Cottage.

MY KIND FRIEND,

YOU wonder at my long silence, but you will find by what I have now to relate, that a sufficient excuse exists for my not communicating with you before. A heavy responsibility rested upon me, and having no hope of a speedy sale for my remaining copies, I formed the resolution of making a little tour to obtain the names of fresh subscribers, or rather new purchasers, to take the copies off my hands. It was an herculean task, but honour and honesty were my prominent motives. I began my expedition towards the east, a supply of books having been previously forwarded to meet me at certain distances. At the first town I succeeded well; at the second, which was Christchurch, badly, and at Lymington worse. At Southampton, I sold many copies. At Ryde, in the Isle of White, Miss O'Keefe, the author of *Patriarchal Times*, &c. having by chance seen a copy of my work, sent for me, treated me with much polite atten-

tion, and was the means subsequently of my disposing of many copies. Miss Emma Parker, who also resides there, became a purchaser, and expressed a flattering opinion of its merits. Indeed throughout the island, I met with great kindness and civility, which I shall not speedily forget. My success at Portsmouth was very limited; but at Winchester, with Miss O'Keefe's recommendations, it became considerably improved, and my list was augmented by several highly respectable names.

This city, my friend, is a most ancient and interesting place, having been for many ages the Saxon capital of the kingdom, and the scene of numerous remarkable events. My stay there was very short, and I had not time to view half its antiquities. Its British name was *Caer Gwent*, or the White City; but that it was built, as some suppose, by the Celtic king, *Ludor Rous Hudibras*, 892 years before Christ, is an idle dream of ignorant historians. The fact is, that *St. Catherine's Hill* was the original British city of *Caer Gwent*. On its summit are to be found the irregular and lofty entrenchments of the Celts, such as surround all their hill-cities; and not far from it is a true British earth-work, forming a labyrinth for the exercise and sports of their

warlike youth, and which to this day is much frequented by the young students of Winchester College. In the valley below, and on the green banks of the Twyford, are still to be seen the rock-altars and pillars of the druids; and it is well known that their temples were seldom if ever erected within the earth-built ramparts of their defenced cities, but in the solemn retirement of groves and forests. On the subjugation of this mountain-fortress by the Romans, that people laid the foundations of the present Winchester, which from Gwent Bolg, the name given to the original fortress by the invading Belgæ, who three hundred years before had driven out and extirpated the ancient Celtic inhabitants, they softened into Venta Belgarum.

But I must be as concise as possible. Here are the ruins of ecclesiastic and royal castles, splendid palaces, superb monasteries, with a magnificent convent-cathedral still in fine preservation. The original cathedral, according to Rudborne and others, was built by Lucius, the first Christian king in Britain. Milner says, "As the Grecian architecture was then perfectly understood and practised, and as South Britain was at the same time in the highest state of civilization and refinement, we cannot doubt of

the cathedral's being built in that style." After the destruction of this church, during the tenth persecution, another arose from its ashes; which, when this city fell into the hands of the desolating Saxons, become the temple of Frea, Thor, and Woden. To this city, according to a work entitled *Nero Caesar*, was brought the body of Boadicea, who at the head of 230,000 ferocious Britons, had carried death and destruction through all the eastern Romanized stations. Here was her corpse burnt on the funeral pile with all the solemn magnificence, the druidical rites and barbarous superstitions, which the British tribes could pay to her memory. Here, in 519, Cerdic, its conqueror, founder of the English monarchy, was solemnly crowned King of Wessex; and with the diadem placed on his head and a gigantic sword in his hand, was carried on a shield by his nobles, amid the thundering shouts of his barbarous host, around the blood-stained idols of the north, while the smoke of the horrid sacrifices of the dead polluted the sanctuary of the house of God. From the period of that grandly savage ceremony performed on this spot, rose the empire of the West Saxons, which extended over the whole Octarchy, and continued increasing

"Like a rock dashed on the troubled lake,
That forms its circles, round succeeding round,
Each wider than the last,"

till all the British isles submitted to its triumphant sceptre, and worlds, then unknown, bowed in homage to its mighty power!

This cathedral, though often re-edified, yet still continuing on the same spot, is certainly a place most worthy the pilgrimage of the lover of antiquity. Here rests the bones of numerous kings, princes, and sainted prelates: here repose the dust of Kinegils, the first Christian king of the West Saxons, who erected a new cathedral for the Christian worship. Here Canute the Great, after his return from the shores of Southampton, where, though his followers hailed him the monarch of the ocean, the surges refused to obey his commands, hung up his imperial diadem above the grand altar, which never again was seen on his brows; and beneath it reposed, in after years, the ashes of that lofty king of many nations. In the nave of this edifice, did Queen Emma walk blindfold over nine ploughshares of iron, heated red hot. On the day of her trial, after having spent the night in fervent prayer at the altar of the convent, the queen is brought

forth before the king, the earls, the bishops, and an immense multitude that crowd and surround every aisle and avenue of the cathedral. The glowing irons are placed in a line on the ground; and now, invoking heaven to assert her innocence, and flinging off her robes of royalty, she is led barefooted betwixt two bishops to the burning metal: the shouts of the multitudes both within and without the lofty pile, roll in thunder along its pillared walls and fretted roof; while amid their shouts they call on God to testify the innocence of their queen. As she slowly approached the irons with upturned eyes, she exclaimed, "O God, who didst save Susannah from the malice of the wicked elders, and the three children from the furnace of fire, save me for the sake of thy holy servant, Swithun, from the fire prepared for me."* She passes over the irons unhurt, and wholly unconscious of their burning power. The king, overwhelmed with contrition, and bathed in tears, falls prostrate in the choir: the lamentations and prayers of the delighted crowds, are turned into acclamations and transports of joy at her miraculous deliverance. She forgives the king, her son, after striking him at his request three times with a wand, and is restored to all her

* See Rudborne and the Annalist, and Ang. Sax. vol. 1. pp. 333, 390.

former possessions and dignities. Such is one of the interesting scenes which have been witnessed in that noble cathedral.

Among my other wanderings, I got access to the Dean's garden, the site of the once-magnificent chapter-house. Here in my musings, I could not but behold the insidious, the tyrannical and abject King John, as he stood in this place before the haughty Archbishop Langton, attended in full state by the Bishops of London, Ely, Lincoln, and Hereford, with a numerous assembly of the prelates and nobles of the land. Here did he fall on his knees before the legate, to receive his absolution from excommunication, and swore by the Gospels to annul all unjust laws and revive those of St. Edward. Here, disgraceful act to Britain, did the fallen monarch renew that fealty and homage, which he had before sworn to Innocent III. for the crown of England. On this spot stood Henry III. and preached a dull sermon to the monks, to induce them to elect his brother Ethelmar for their bishop: and here presented herself, the fair and regal pilgrim of Palestine, Queen Eleonora, after her return from the holy wars to which she followed her husband, to claim the prayers of the monastic confraternity: 'Tis past! Royalty will never again hold its

solemn assemblies within the dilapidated walls of this once-noble divan of ecclesiastic state!

But how much is it to be regretted, that amid the universal wreck of monasteries, castles, and palaces, the tomb of Alfred the Great, for the honour of the nation, should not have been spared. Alas! when the destruction of Hyde Abbey was completed, the monuments of the illustrious dead, names great in the annals of our country, were all swept away; and a gaol has been erected for the reception of guilt and infamy, on the very spot where rested the sacred dust of our noblest kings. Yes, where pealed the solemn anthem of praise and devotion to the heaven-like melody of the deeply tuneful organ along the pillared fane, is now heard the dismal clang of chains, the cry of the prisoner, and the midnight groan of the blood-stained murderer!

Of the palace of Wolvesey, said to have been built by King Egil, only a few fragments are standing; and of the royal castle, built by the Conqueror, once the residence of so many mighty kings, whose dungeons have so often echoed to the sigh of the wretched prisoner, and in whose court has been spilt so much noble blood; the scene of the most splendid embassies, and solemn councils, and august meetings of princes; where

Mary held her court when she received Philip and his noble cavaliers, and her nuptials were celebrated with unbounded magnificence, scarce a wreck remains save the chapel,—now become the county-hall,—with the pretended *Tabula Rotunda* of King Arthur, who never was within its walls. To complete the absurdity of this table, the figures painted on it are in the costume of the age of Henry VIII.

But I must end my slight researches, and inform you that from this place I returned by a different route towards my home, from which I had now been absent several weeks. During my perambulation, I disposed of a great number of copies, occasionally meeting with some eccentric characters, a few rebuffs, and much friendly encouragement. I heard many curious and rich pieces of criticism on my work; and although all concurred in general approval of it, yet each pointed out a particular and different part, which he considered capable of improvement. In short, I found that if I altered the poem according to the suggestions of those who favoured me with their sapient remarks upon it, not one line of the original would have remained. So much for criticism!

Returning via Dorchester, I there heard of a

poor fellow, whose home was in a remote part of Cornwall, and who, fancying himself the last, if not the best, of the Cornubian or Cymtian bards, invoked his Muse, not of Parnassus, but rather of the venerable druidical hill of Carn Bréh, or Penringhvaed,—in Celtic, the Promontory of Blood,—to compose a long Elegy on the lamented death of the Princess Charlotte, and an epistle of condolence to his Royal Highness Prince Leopold. With this bardish, or rather barbarous effusion, he set out on foot from his native village, and walked the whole way to London to obtain an audience, and present it to the prince. On his arrival in town, he was taken ill and confined for several days to his miserable lodgings. When he recovered, to his great disappointment, he found that the prince had quitted London, and was gone to reside at Came House, near Dorchester. He found, too, that all his money was spent, and that he must part with his watch, the purchase of his early youth, to defray the expenses incurred by his sickness and protracted stay in London, and to enable him to return to his distant home.

But the poor old bard journeyed not in despair. Dorchester lay in his road back, and he felt assured that when he got access to present his

exquisite verses to Prince Leopold, his Highness would amply repay him for all his toils on the way, and enable him to return with overflowing pockets to his anxious wife and family. In good time, the wandering minstrel reached the capital of Dorsetshire; but he was now penniless, and had nothing left to pledge, save the garments with which he was poorly clad. I chanced to be at the same inn where this Celtic Cornubian had put up, was informed by the landlord of his Quixotic journey, and entreated to read his Elegy. The tale of his toilsome wanderings had something wild and romantic in it, and I felt eager to see and converse with him. On introduction, I found him to be a plain countryman, rude and unlettered, and totally dissimilar in every respect to those ideas we conceive of the ancient minstrels, the attendants and companions of kings and renowned warriors; yet so confident of the ultimate success of his poetry, as to leave no room for sympathetic sorrow at his disappointments. He soon produced a large sheet of paper, divided in several places by frequent folding and much soiled by repeated use, and placing it in my hands with an air of proud satisfaction, bade me read the very best verses yet composed on the melancholy occasion. I found

the lines to be as far beneath those of Sternhold and Hopkins, as theirs are below the inimitable fire of the divine bard of Palestine.

The next day, the landlord first detaining the poor man's hat for his night's lodging, &c. he sat out early with uncovered brows to obtain an audience of Prince Leopold, two miles distant. It was now that he might be said to have appeared more like the ancient bards of his venerable nation, than he ever did before, as his full gray locks streamed on the morning winds. Need I tell you that he totally failed in his mission. But obtaining about five shillings from the domestics of the Prince, he returned to the inn, redeemed his hat, and went his way, disconsolate and sad, towards his native wilds in Cornwall. Long ere he reached the beautiful banks of the Tamar, he must have been totally dependant on the generosity of strangers for a wretched existence, and the means of beholding once more his sadly-anxious wife and family. Poor minstrel! thou didst set out on thy journey in the proud expectation of royal favour, emolument, and applause; but returnedst to thy miserable cottage a bankrupt in hope, and a very beggar! Alas! how many bards of high deservings have, like thee, commenced their gay career with the smiling sun of

Hope full upon them, and the fair path which led to the hill of Fame appearing showered with blossoms of every hue : but ere they reached half up the steep, the tempests of Calamity arose and swept them down the precipice, miserably to perish in the gulphs of Despair !

But to return to myself. Shortly after my arrival at home, I was seized with typhus fever, from which I am now but very slowly recovering. My finances would not admit of my procuring medical aid, beyond that afforded by a common soldier, who had acted as assistant to an army surgeon and now resided in the village : yet to this poor fellow, I gratefully acknowledge, under God, do I owe my life. Poor Maria, with the fatigue of nightly watchings by my bedside, joined to her nervous debility, is herself in a very weak state. Excuse this imperfect epistle : when I am more recovered, you shall hear from me again.

Yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Plymouth.

DEAR FRANK,

HERE I am again in the West of England ! Surely I am doomed for ever to be a rover ! Soon after my recovery, I found it necessary to set off with fresh copies of my work, towards a part of the country directly opposite to my last peregrination, while Maria took charge of my little school.

I now visited Somersetshire, where I obtained many subscribers. On reaching Chard, I secured a place on the coach for Honiton. Shortly after we left that town, a tremendous hurricane* began to pour forth its fury upon us. The torrents of rain, the irresistible gusts of wind, and towards evening the "deep dread-bolted" thunder and terrific lightning mingled together with such an overwhelming impetuosity and dreadful effect, as I never before witnessed.

* The memorable tempest in the month of March, 1818.

“ The wrathful skies

Gallowed the very wanderers of the dark,
And made them keep their caves : since I was man
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard !”

During six hours was I exposed on the box of the coach, the only outside passenger, without great coat or cloak to protect me from its unrelenting violence. The horses frequently could not be made to move against the terrible warfare of the raging elements. On our arrival at Honiton, we found mills blown down, houses unroofed, road-waggon upset ; and further travelling was rendered utterly impracticable from the sudden overflowing of rivers and the falling of immense trees, while the lightning ran along the street like a torrent of fire. How I survived the bitterness of its fury, I know not : but we are all immortal till our hour is come, and then what shall save us ?

I next visited Sidmouth, Exmouth, &c. where I found no friends to patronise the Muses ; and on my arrival at Topsham I was so lame, as to be scarcely able to walk. The next day I crawled on to Exeter, which I reached with difficulty, and was there confined to my room nearly three

weeks. When I was again able to get out, I did not sell more than three copies in the whole city.

At Crediton, I drank tea and spent some hours with a clergyman of the name of Lightfoot, a particular college friend of Mr. Southey, some of whose letters he read to me, giving an interesting account of his being introduced at Court, and created Poet Laureate. He tells his friend that he did not dream of the high honour conferred upon him, which was first offered by the Prince Regent to Sir Walter Scott, who generously and strongly recommended Southey. Mr. Lightfoot informed me that this laurel-crowned chief of the bards in the outset of his poetical career, had many and great difficulties to struggle with, and numerous obstacles to overcome; but that by perseverance he conquered every thing, and at last achieved the sunny mountain of fame.

In the neighbourhood of Teignmouth, I became acquainted with Mr. R—, a young man of great professional talent and general knowledge, who introduced me by letter to Dr. Turton, well known in the literary world as a translator of Linnæus, and the author of many other scientific and valuable works. Being so near, I determined once more to visit Paington. I hired a horse, and with my new friend rode thither incog. I

cannot express to you, Frank, what were my feelings on visiting again, after so long an absence, the vicinity of my worthy and generous friends. I soon found that length of years had entirely obliterated all remembrance of my person from every inhabitant of the place, and I determined not to make myself known. Even my friend Metherel, with whom I sat some minutes in the bar of the inn, recognised me not. Learning that both himself and Mrs. M. were well, I was satisfied ; and with a feeling of romantic pleasure, quitted the place without making myself known to any one.

From Totness I sailed down the river Dart, famed for the variety and pleasantness of the views on its banks ; but the Spring was not far enough advanced to exhibit the usual beauties. The weather was likewise extremely boisterous, and the latter part of the voyage was not unattended with danger. At Dartmouth, during my stay, was held a convocation of dissenting ministers from different parts of the county, some of whom had seen my poem. One of them, Mr. W—— of N—— B——, a friend of mine and a man of good sound sense, but who happening to be very poor was considered of little importance among them, told me how unfeelingly some of

this erudite assembly, who, risen from the counter and the cobbler's stall by their sanctified looks and long prayers to the assumption of scholars and gentlemen, had been sneering at my epic.

"Dear me!" cried one of the chief of these tender-hearted saints, "it looks so, to see a man hawking about his own works. Besides, he should have come strongly recommended. How can he expect any countenance, running about in this way." Now it so happened, that I had actually presented a recommendatory letter to this very person, from the Rev. Mr. D—— of P——, in D——shire.

"Oh," said another, with an attempt to be witty, "it is the Pilgrimage of Childe ——."

"And what are his works," said a third, "that they are thus hawked about? I am sure I would not give the lumber house room."

"Nor I either," added a fourth. "I was foolish enough to purchase a copy, and sat down with a friend, who is a very clever judge of poetical talent, to see if it really possessed any claim to merit. But our labour, as we expected, was in vain: we read through several pages, and could not possibly discover a single line of poetry, or any thing like it in the whole farrago of rubbish. And then to call it an epic! What

presumption! I question very much if the author, poor young man, knows what is meant by the term, any more than he understands the common rules of English grammar, which he has woefully violated. My brother minister, Mr. A. of Exeter, was very right when he declared he had never read such a mess of wild bombastic nonsense in all his life."

"Dear me! and founded on the Scriptures too!" returned another of these godly worthies, "what a pity such stuff should be permitted to be published. I think the man ought to be taken up, really.—But I believe, gentlemen, that it is time we should attend divine worship. My bowels yearn with compassion for the poor dear heathen negroes abroad, and I hope we shall have a liberal contribution for them this evening."

Discerning, candid young men! I should presume to give them the advice of Apelles to the cobbler, *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. I am of opinion that they are about as good judges of the merits or demerits of my poem, as a Jack Tar is of the difference between the *Alaric* of Scuderi, the *Pucelle* of Chapelain, or the Saxon *Beowulf*, and the classic strains of a Homer and a Virgil; or how far the *Phædra* of Racine, the *Macbeth* of

Shakspeare, and the *Caractacus* of Mason excel in dramatic excellence and poetic beauty, the *Taka-o-chi-cou-Ell*, the glory and boast of the Chinese stage. But let them pass. Time will discover who are the best judges of my ambitious Muse.

How forcibly, my dear friend, does every part of this country recal to my memory by-gone days and scenes. I recollect every thing, but no one recollects me. On my journey from Dartmouth to Kingsbridge, I passed again the very spot where last I parted with Mary. Do not laugh at my weakness. I knew it well; and I could not restrain a flood of tears that burst involuntarily from my eyes. How vivid, at that painful moment, were my recollections of the past. I saw her again before me, plain as the sunbeam, embodied in her beauty and her tears. I thought on her last words. I closed my eyes, but I saw her still. I fled the spot, but still her lovely form seemed to follow me. Forgive me :— I shall never behold that spot again !

And was it here we parted ? Was it here
Her voice, in melting music, on my ear
Breathed its last witching tones,—then died away
As mid the clouds expire some seraph lay ?

While to my fond adoring eyes her form,
Like a winged shape of brightness on the storm,
Illumed these gloomy wilds ; and her radiant eye
Was filled with tears, and her bosom's deep-heaved sigh
Came like a fitful breeze that summer yields,
Fraught with the fragrancy of rose-clad fields ?

And was it here that her last vows she spoke ?
Here from each others arms we tearful broke
To meet no more ? O, how thy flashing gleams,
Remembrance of the past, like painful dreams
Come o'er my soul ! Could I view thee, Mary, now,
How changed wouldst thou appear ! But never more
Shall I behold that sadly faded brow.—
The pangs I suffered for thy sake are o'er ;
Yet they have left a melancholy shade
E'en on life's brightest scenes, like clouds that oft invade
The summer sunbeams, which steal faintly through
Their misty skirts to drink the noontide dew.

O, mine has been a life of care and pain,
And still I drag misfortune's heavy chain ;
Still am I doomed to heave despair's deep sigh,—
Hope is delusion, grief reality !
One friend I had, that o'er life's sickening gloom
Shone like a transient star : and the dark tomb
On him hath closed for aye ; or ere this hour,
His foot had pressed the threshold of my bower.

He, too, for ever from my sight is torn,
The ocean surge hath to his green grave borne

The gallant soldier. In some western isle,
 Where on thy turf the flowers of summer smile
 With bloom perpetual, thou dost dreamless sleep.
 In vain I thee bewail, in vain I weep !
 I ne'er shall cross the wild Atlantic wave,
 Nor roam a pilgrim to that distant shore
 Where thou art laid :—the stranger's early grave !
 Then peace to thy dust ! eternally farewell !
 For I shall never, never meet thee more,
 'Till with the worm I, too, in darkness dwell !

But from this spot, O let me fly !
 For evening reigns, and before my eye
 Flit shadows of those I loved so well.——
 Away, away, my burning brain
 Seems like the sunset glow of the west !
 So oft with agonizing pain,
 I have parted from those I love the best ;
 That I would fain in Lethe's stream,
 Bid memory quench her latest gleam,
 And, plunged in darkness, be at rest !

I have obtained many subscribers here, and two literary and warm-hearted friends in Mr. Welch of Stonehouse, and Mr. Carrington of Dock,* who received me with so much hospitality and kindness, that I cannot express to you how

* Mr. Welch is the author of a very ingenious *Theory of the Earth*, reconciling the Mosaic account of the creation with modern philosophy. Mr. Carrington is the author of *The Banks of Tamar*, a poem of great and acknowledged merit ; as also of *Dartmoor*, a poem far surpassing anything ever written on that subject, and possessing legitimate claims to universal patronage.

much I feel indebted to them, while their open-hearted and cordial friendship I shall never forget. Mr. Carrington is a true child of the Muses, and possesses the immortal fire of a lofty genius; the world must, ere long, hear of his great poetical talents. I cannot say as much for the author of a new forthcoming *History of Cornwall*; to further which, Mr. Carrington is translating for him everything connected with it, that is not to be found in his mother tongue. I waited on him for the high honour of having his name added to my list of subscribers; but he could not condescend so far. His haughtiness appeared to me only equalled by his illiberality; "but what is to be expected from one, whose life has been employed in the edifying and enlightening exertation of rolling pills, spreading plaisters, compounding quack medicines, and fabricating boluses? Who expects the colossal strides of a giant from the puny dimensions of a dwarf, or hopes to see the stately march of the war-horse in the wriggling of a worm?"

Before I quit the west, I intend proceeding as far as Falmouth, from whence I shall return to this place; when you may expect to hear from me again. Till then, my friend, adieu.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXIX.

*From Mr. R. to Sylvaicus.**Plymouth Dock.*

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE been anxious the whole of the past week to write respecting your concerns, which to say the least, interest me very much; but professional duties, over which I could have no controul, prevented me till now.

On Monday week I was at Teignmouth and saw Dr. Turton: we conversed about you largely. The Dr. regrets exceedingly that he did not know, had it been only half, the merits of your excellent work; for then he would have paid you every attention, even to the neglect of other business. "When the author presented his book, I bought it," says the Dr. "merely because you desired him to call on me, thinking it money thrown away on one of the numberless class of ephemeral productions that almost daily infest us. It lay on the table neglected four or five days, until I had the curiosity to read two or three

pages, when I was most forcibly struck with the appearance of genius and merit, which we have since found so fully displayed throughout the work. His images and figures are very fine; he has an uncommonly vivid imagination; in short, I consider it one of the very best works that has come out the last forty years. I think I can introduce him to some families of wealth and merit, who would feel honoured in patronising the author of such a work." He also added a desire, that you would write him a note with your address, &c. which I must beg, my dear sir, you will do as soon as possible. The Dr. has canvassed for you, and defended your work; and Mrs. Turton, a very clever lady, has read it twice over.

I hope you are agreeably surprised by the first page of my letter: my mind has been full of writing to you many days. Mr. W. delivered me your letter: I forgot to begin mine with acknowledging it. He told me of the ill reception your work met with from the tasteless parsons at Dartmouth. I cannot describe to you how indignant I felt, when he told me of their unfeeling conduct; it stamps an indelible disgrace on their stupid characters. But never regard them, or any other conceited blockheads.

Your work and name are rising, and will continue to rise in public estimation. Mrs. Turton observed that you had plenty of time before you, and only wanted one powerful helping hand to bring you into public notice. As it regards your second edition, the Dr. is decidedly of opinion that you should not have a large impression of the same quality as your present edition; rather have fifty or a hundred good copies quarto, and if you can engage an artist to engrave a frontispiece from some striking scene in your work, all the better. Such a work would be fit to appear on a nobleman's table, and he would not be ashamed of it.

I have now finished all I intended to say on your work, and come to yourself. You complain of "your spirits being always in extremes." This proceeds from an excess of sensibility; or being too quickly acted on by the lightest impressions, and causes of the least importance;—a sort of sensitive plant, alive at every inlet of the senses, and feeling even a distant approach. You cannot eradicate; but you may, with the assistance of religion or Christian philosophy, resignation to the system of Divine Providence, relying on your interest in the Divine protection through the mediation of Christ, successfully combat the innate foe to your peace. And here

let me beg of you not to bring into your aid, any of those temporary, fleeting, baneful auxiliaries that "steal away men's brains and senses." Their introduction and effects are so insidious, and the consequences so fatal, that I could not refrain from reminding you of our past conversations on that subject.

Let me conclude, my dear sir, with praying that you may be blessed in every thing by that Great Being, to whose care I commend you. Such is the prayer of

Your sincere friend,

W. C. B——.

LETTER LXXX.

Plymouth Dock.

DEAR FRANK,

I AM just returned from my excursion through Cornwall; and I must say, that I am heartily sick of this tedious and unpleasant peregrination, and long once more to be at home. The heat has been so overpowering, that worn down with anxiety and the incessant toil of so much daily walking, I have sometimes lain down by the road side, faint and sick, and prayed to die that I might be released at once from all my misery and my cares.

I have visited, no doubt for the last time, the old British towers of Launceston; and when at Bodmin, I recalled to mind poor ambitious Perkin, the tool of a violent party, who assumed the romantic appellation of "the White Rose of England," and here first took the style and title of Richard IV. of England. Short indeed was his career of royalty; nor could the sainted shrine De Bello Loco, or Beaulieu, protect him from the power of Henry.

At Truro I found a most hospitable, kind, and pleasant friend in the Rev. J. Collins. Truro abounds in poetasters, with the Rev. Mr. Polwhele at their head. One has written a poem on the churchyard; another some doggrel stuff on a London traveller; and a third, although no saint himself, a wretched farrago on the profligacy and licentiousness of the age. To this man, who I understood had some influence in Truro, and was said to be possessed of the most gentlemanly manners, taste, and talent, I was weak enough to send a polite and complimentary letter, with a copy of my poem. This copy and note, when I called a day or two after, were returned to me by this paragon of good breeding at the door by his servant, without deigning to allow me the superlative honour of approaching the sublime presence of his high mightiness. Prodigious!!

I had the further honour of waiting on the Rev. Mr. Polwhele, and was admitted certainly to the privilege of an interview with him; but received with such stately coldness, as made me wish that I had never given myself the trouble; nor, though so many years an author himself, did he condescend to take a single copy of my work.

I was introduced one day, during my stay in Truro, to a gentleman of that town by my name

and profession, when he said, "I hope, sir, you are come to Truro for the purpose of residing amongst us. One of the most pleasant situations in the world for a poet; delightful country, and most salubrious air. We only want one bard more here, and then Truro will be the Parnassus of England. We shall then in reality have the nine Muses residing among us corporeally:—a greater honour, I imagine, than any other town in this country can boast, except London."

Indeed! said I. The air of Truro seems very inimical to the health of the Muses; for, if I may judge from the productions I have lately seen, their ladyships of Helicon are all miserable invalids, and have never enjoyed a day of sound vigorous health since they have been so unfortunate as to make this their abode. Most of them appear to be labouring under such horrible diseases, as not not to be able to utter a single strain of melody in unison with the harp of Apollo. Truro indeed! why 'tis quite a lazaretto of the Castalian divinities, wherein they are all afflicted with maladies

"Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverish kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, cholic-pangs,

Demoniac phrensy, moping melancholy
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums."

I should advise your would-be poets of Truro if they pant after that envied distinction,—immortalization, to have their works splendidly bound in gold and gems, like the gaudy sepulchres of the Jews that contained nothing but rottenness and corruption, and very carefully secured in some great national library, as Julius Cæsar and the old stoic, Brutus, did the productions of their Muse; and for the very same reason,—to preserve them from that oblivion which most inevitably awaits all bad poetry.

But to quit these bardic worthies and their works. I was happy to return to my kind friends at Plymouth, from whence I shall set off to-morrow by the stage once more for the cottage. My good friend, I have hitherto been asleep with regard to literary affairs; and no one, till I came hither, has ever been kind enough to awake me. Why, I have taken a world of useless trouble. I should have gone to London, the mart of literature, got among the booksellers, and sold the copy-right of my poem. It seems they often give ample remuneration for the labours of the pen. They

are the real and only effectual patrons of genius. I shall hurry home in high spirits; and as not more than fifty or sixty copies of this edition now remain, I will procure letters of recommendation and hasten to London. A new era dawns upon me. The night of despair gives way to a morning of brightness and prosperity. You will see me soon, when I shall require your opinion of the following lines, as well as a hearty welcome for

Your friend,

SYLVAICUS.

THE PURSUIT OF PHARAOH.

There's darkness on the Erythæan deep,
Where the green waves rush with foamy sweep,
And heavily roll o'er Migdol's shore,
Whose cliffs prolong the lengthened roar.

Hark!—the shrill trumpet's warlike wail
Comes from the hills: the glare of mail
Breaks through the gloom: the red torches' flash,
The chariot din, the cymbal clash,
The horseman's clang, the gleaming spear
Proclaim the van of battle near!
Where now is thy mysterious power,
Leader of Israel?—'Tis the hour
Of fight, pursuit, revenge, and fear:—
The dreadful host of Egypt's near!

There's no escape!—The sea's dark swell
Before thee roars :—behind, the yell
And shout of Misraim's bannered line,
With targe, and lance, and brigandine,
And regal car, and sworded king,
Encircled with a fiery ring
Of warriors, panting for the fight,
With brands unsheathed that shed a light,
A death-gleam o'er the splendid throng,
As vauntingly they pass along ;
While their deep march is heard from far,
And clashing shields that threaten war !

The Hebrew leader stretched his rod ;
The sea obeyed his god-like nod,
And flung its mountain surges back,
Leaving a deep and oozy track,
A pathway through the foam-curved tide,
That loftily rose on either side,
Amid the gloom of that strange night,
Like walls of brass and towers of might.

On rushed through that dim ocean vale,
With trembling fear and wonder pale,
The Hebrew bands in long array.—
When burst upon their darksome way
A flood of rainbow-coloured light,
Streaming o'er plume and helmet bright,
Banner and pennon, shield and glove,
O'er chief, and serf, and glittering wave !
For now the cloud that led them towers,

Their hindmost guard from hostile powers,
A pyramid of dazzling glory,
The mightiest spell in eastern story.
Mid that up-gushing swell of light,
That onward through the darksome night
Its diamond blazing radiance shed,
O'er each fear-hurried pilgrim's head,
Were winged splendours, shapes of heaven,
Girt in the sky-wrought pomps of even ;
While thick their flashing glories shone,
More brilliant than the morning sun !

But on the heathen charioteer,
The prancing steed, the halberdier,
Their pride of war, deep darkness fell ;
The wailing horn, the threatening yell
Died into silence : and there came
From the black pillar a fitful flame,
A lurid gleam. Then deep and loud
The thunder-peal broke from that cloud,
While fiery shapes of dreadful mien
Where seen its gloomy skirts between !

The Hebrew tribes have gained the strand,
Their leader stretches forth his hand :
Down fell with sudden rush and roar,
The mountain billows piled on high !
One wild, fierce death-shriek rung along the shore,
And all was still : nor voice, nor cry
Came from that dark and desolate wave,
The heathen warriors' unblest grave !

LETTER LXXXI.

From Mr. Welch to Sylvaticus.

Stonehouse.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE perused with attention your poem, and cannot but congratulate you on your great success in the most difficult and arduous attempt of human genius. It is an admirable composition; it has many inimitable beauties, and, with a few (to me) apparent faults expunged or corrected, will, in my opinion, rank as one of the first in the English language. The principal faults I allude to, I have already pointed out during some of our conversations on the subject, when you were at Plymouth; I shall therefore now dwell chiefly on its beauties. I assure you it has been read with much pleasure and delight by those friends to whom I have shown it, both here and at Exeter. Your similes are beautiful, apposite, and correct; and your introduction of mythological comparisons I highly approve of, although an objection has been made to it by some of your readers:

but you are fully borne out by Milton and other eminent writers; and, to me, the work would not possess half its beauties without such classical allusions.

I have heard it oddly remarked, that poetry is, only the *pasty* of literature: but I should rather call it the flowers. We will, then, take the latter figure in order to illustrate the subject. A well laid out garden is presented to our view; we are pleased with its form, and feel increasing delight from the variety it affords: its arrangement, its beds of roses, tulips, and carnations, intermingled with plants and shrubs, communicate agreeable sensations in proportion to their order and beauty. If, however, on the contrary, we view an enclosure crowded to excess, even with the most rare productions of nature, and judiciously interspersed, we become as it were bewildered, scarcely knowing which first to admire, or where to begin. Another simile will also illustrate the point. Two well formed and beautiful females pass in succession before us; one decorated with a profusion of gems, the other elegantly but more simply adorned: her jewels are but few; notwithstanding, they are appropriately displayed. The former may produce astonishment; the latter only will ensure delight. It is, then, in poetry as in a

garden, or in a judicious exhibition of jewels; and it might be further observed, that in a painting there must be the dark shades in order to relieve and bring forward the lighter ones, while by such contrast the picture becomes more valuable and enchanting.

Having thus premised, I proceed to remark on your poem, which I have read with particular attention, and do sincerely declare, that the oftener I read it the more I am pleased. Your introduction is good; the congregating of the witches, their success by infernal spirits enticing the hero to leave his flocks for the dangers and honours of the camp, his father's vest, his sublime dream, his challenge to the giant, &c. are pieces of admirable composition: whilst your representation of the descent of the Deity to battle, is superior to any thing I have ever read, the sacred pages excepted. To say it cannot be surpassed, would be tame; I think I may assert it never will be equalled. However, to give full effect to these and numberless other beauties in different parts of your excellent work, the mind should not be cloyed with too many brilliant metaphors, where it is possible to dispense with them. The greatest fault, therefore, I possibly can find in, that your work, like Ossian's poems,

possesses too many excellences. The splendour is overpowering.

To give you a curious idea of their effects produced on myself, my flesh seems to creep as it were, until I am obliged to lay the book aside in order to recover. I, however, cannot but think, that if certain parts, which I have before pointed out to you, wholly the vivid creation of your rich and luxuriant imagination, and having no foundation in history, were lopped away, it would be an improvement to the work, and render the other parts transcendently effective.

Wishing you most sincerely that success which your talents deserve,

I remain, dear sir,

Yours truly,

W. WELCH.

LETTER LXXXII.

London.

MY DEAR MARIA,

I AM once more in the gay metropolis, which I safely reached, *via* Bristol and Bath, having disposed on my route of nearly all the copies that remained. At Bath, I saw the Rev. Mr. Warner, who wrote a warm recommendation of my poetical powers to the booksellers here in town, which with Dr. Turton's, that I received at the Bristol post-office, and several others, contributed greatly to increase my hopes of success. At Chippenham, also, I was fortunate enough to meet with a kind-hearted friend and warm supporter in the Rev. Josiah Allport. His encomiums on my production are encouraging in the highest degree.

On the morning after my arrival in town, with what a throbbing heart of hope and fear did I quit my lodging, near the Strand, to go to Dr. Turton's bookseller, Mr. B——, in Duke Street, with my testimonials in my pocket. I was received with much politeness, and Mr. B. led

me to expect that if my poem answered the Dr's flattering commendations, he would become the purchaser of the copyright. But as the work with its MS. additions, its curtailments and improvements, was not arrived from Weymouth, where, as you know, I had left it after my return from the west, with the Rev. Dr. Duprè for his revision, nothing could be immediately arranged.

Having another equally strong recommendation to Messrs. P—— and M——, in the Strand, from a gentleman at Reading, in Berkshire, I called there also in the course of the day, and laid before Mr. P. my letters. One of them was from a first-rate poet of the day, the Rev. H. H. Milman, in which among other things he is pleased to say, "There is in the poem great power, and still greater promise. A young man capable of writing such a work, should hereafter be a writer of great eminence. The versification pleases me at times much; and a second poem will, I doubt not, be a still stronger and more successful effort of your imagination. I was much struck with the paraphrase of God coming from Teman; and also the sublime appearance of Michael at the end of the fifth book. I wish you every possible success, and shall be happy to give you any assistance in my power." This gentleman received

me, when at Reading, with every mark of kindness and respect.

Mr. P. seems to have felt the due weight of such respectable testimonials, and has shown me ever since so much friendship and attention, that his house is become as it were my home. As he is in the continual possession of free admission tickets, he indulges me with repeated opportunities of attending the theatres. Mr. P. has placed my book, as *originally* written, in the hands of several London critics, for their report of its merits and demerits. I will copy two letters which he has received, among many others equally favourable, stating the opinion of two celebrated authors, because I know it will gratify you much.

To Messrs. P. and M. St. Clements, Strand.

"GENTLEMEN,

THE poem which you sent me yesterday, seems the work of a man of a truly poetic mind: and with a knowledge of versification which he might easily improve into excellence. But with you, the great question of course is whether the work, as it stands, is likely to be popular; and I will confess it does not seem to me to promise a very extensive sale, because the subject is unfortunate, for the world is weary of Scripture sub-

jects. The poem is too long for general readers; and in this age of sentimental romance and extravagant adventure, it would scarcely repay you any *large* price which its genuine merits might induce you to hazard. The author 'may be fairly assured, that he *can* write good poetry; and that he only wants a little attention to the spirit of the day, to write popular and profitable poems.

I am, your's, &c.

GEORGE CROLY."

To Mr. P. St. Clements, Strand.

"SIR,

THE poem you sent for my opinion is a sublime story, and it is described with a power and felicity not easy to be rivalled. But some critics, I suspect, will conclude it to be too long, too sombre, and that it exhibits more of the fruits of serious observation, than vividness of creative fancy. It seems clear to me, that had the good things with which it abounds been condensed a little more, and certain superfluities, which it is not without, been lopped off, it would probably have formed the *very best epic poem extant*. But as it is, it sometimes occasions a sense of weariness, united to some flattened and cumbrous lines, which makes one inclined to skip a page or two; although dreading the loss of those beauties which spring up as it were spontaneously, and often unexpectedly, throughout the work.

The sale for some years will be dull, but ultimately it will be read and admired in spite of the critics; and on this principle, that time will lead to the discovery of those numerous isolated beauties, with which each book abounds.

I am at a loss to think why the author has not revised it with more care. I am no *wordmonger*; but there are a variety of verbal errors, which should be corrected with care. You have my genuine opinion, such as you required, and it is for you to judge further and to act. I fear he has not hit the prevailing taste of the age, and that he had the virtue to write less from the desire of gain, than from the impulse of genius.

I am, dear sir,

Yours, &c.

Euston Square.

You will be rejoiced to learn that my poetic labours have been so flatteringly appreciated in London, and that my journey is likely to prove so very advantageous. But till the arrival of the corrected copy from Weymouth, nothing decisive can be done.

Remember me to little Edwin and my dear mother, and believe me, dear Maria,

Yours affectionately,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXXIII.

London.

DEAR MARIA,

I HAVE most heart-cheering news to tell you. On the arrival of the corrected copy, it was shown to other critical friends of Mr. P. in town, who highly approved of the alterations and additions; and he immediately offered me very handsome terms, which I accepted, and entered into a written engagement to let him be the publisher of all my future works. A very handsome edition, printed by Bensley, is to be speedily brought out, and permission has been obtained for me to dedicate it to His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. Dearest Maria, is not this a triumph at last; a great reward, a noble recompense for all the cruel neglect, the toil, the contempt, and the sufferings I have endured. I am encouraged to believe that the reviewers, though they took no notice of my first edition, will do me every justice now that the work is brought out in London, and under the high auspices of royal patronage. The deep night of darkness,

want, and misery, is past; and all to come will now be brightness and happiness. I have no words whereby to express my joy; you, who have so cheerfully shared with me the bitterness of the past, can only fully appreciate this triumph of my success, and partake of the transport I experience.

I am pleased to find that the school has increased in my absence. You may expect me at the hermitage in a few days. Till then, dear Maria, adieu.

Yours, ever affectionately,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXXIV.

From the Rev. J. Allport to Sybaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE great pleasure in being able to inform you, that having consulted the different friends to whom I lent your volume, in consequence of the high gratification it had afforded myself, the testimonies of approbation and pleasure I have received are invariable and unmingled. I have also gathered that twelve or fourteen copies must have been procured hereabout since your work was made known in the neighbourhood.

This is no more than what I anticipated. Had I been favoured with a personal acquaintance with you before, to increase and direct the interest I felt on the perusal of your work, and which then induced me to lend it to some friends chiefly that they might partake of the rich mental feast on which I had regaled, I think the purchases would have been trebled. Your new edition is

a splendid improvement, and I believe there can be few persons, who when the garland in which the choicest flowers of poesy brought from every classic mead, and combined with all the skill, and beauty, and taste, and strength of poetic and classic genius, is exhibited to their view, would not be filled with admiration, and feel a desire to possess so rich a treasure. Indeed I find it to be the case, as the forementioned circumstances testify.

For myself, I can say that every part afforded me the greatest delight; and that delight was increased with increasing admiration on a second perusal. Whilst the mind is instructed and enlightened by the order of your performance, it is captivated by the natural and simple arrangement of the majestic mass, by the elegant and beautiful embellishments of your structure, and it receives no offence by any inconsistencies.

I feel persuaded the work is calculated to charm others in a similar way; for what makes it peculiarly interesting and valuable, and will insure to it perpetual worth and undying fame, is that purity and chastity of a Christian mind with which it is enriched and dignified; while it reflects the excellences and attractions of ancient

and modern poetry, under the divine effulgence of Revelation. I have written to my booksellers in town, and urged them to promote its sale.

I shall be most happy to hear of any success attending you, and to see you again at Chippenham.

I am, dear sir,

Most truly yours,

JOSIAH ALLPORT.

P.S. You may set me down for a dozen copies of your next work.

LETTER LXXXV.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

SINCE my return home, I have been very busily engaged with my school, which is now increased to more than twenty boys. I devote every leisure moment to the composition of a second epic. This poem is not founded on Sacred Writ; no, nor even rests on the basis of profane history. The tale, the characters, and the incidents are wholly the offspring of my own imagination. I wish to give full play to the romance of fancy, which is also, it seems, the prevailing taste of the day: but I intend to keep it as much as possible within the bounds of classic chasteness and propriety. Here I cannot but remark to you the happiness of my present situation, compared with that period during which I was employed on my first epic. Then all was doubt, uncertainty, fear, and privation.—

But I must make you acquainted with a curious affair that has lately occurred here. The ignorance and superstition of the inhabitants of this

my native village are proverbial: yet without being witness to the scenes which have been nightly played at the house of a peasant here, you will scarcely credit the following story.

A common labourer of the name of Peter, the father of eleven children, resides in an isolated cottage at the end of the village. About a twelve-month ago, Peter's uncle departed this life, leaving him the heir to his whole property, consisting of household furniture, a watch, clothes, &c. orally bequeathed before two or more witnesses. But other relatives of the deceased, not satisfied, it is said, with so partial a bequest, threaten to put in their claim for a portion of the goods and chattels. Alas! the cruel wretches, worse than the witch of Endor! their magic threats have burst the ceremonies of the dead, making the very grave to yawn asunder, and cast the sheeted ghost abroad to stalk upon the earth again!

The village, in consequence of the supernatural visitant which, it would appear, has nightly haunted the chamber wherein Peter's uncle closed his mortal career, has been thrown for the last fortnight into the most alarming state of terror and anxiety. The old women do not dare singly to venture a step from their own thresholds, after it is dark; nor the young ones to enter a room

after sunset, without a candle. All politics are quite at an end. Bonaparte and the Queen are not so much as named among us, and Scandal herself appears struck dumb: while nothing is to be heard but marvellous stories of ghost-haunted dwellings, of hobgoblins, and devils.

By the kind invitation of Peter, an assembly has been convened nightly at the haunted house, of all the gossips, male and female, in the neighbourhood, to witness the due performance of the perturbed spectre, which constantly commences about ten minutes after two boys, (the elder seven years old), are by their father, unhappy Peter, led up to bed. At these ghostly conventicles, Peter and his oldest son, a young man, sit in solemn and mournful state, with a great Bible spread before them; and Peter, who fancies himself a man of learning,—so deeply read in the science of astronomy as to be able even to make an almanack, could he but find out at what times the changes of the moon take place; and so profoundly versed in that most profound and abstruse study of the Chaldeans called astrology, as to far exceed the renowned Moore and his sapient colleagues in the knowledge of future events, for which high learning, for high it must be since it reaches to the stars, he was most judiciously cho-

sen, by wiser heads than even his own, to be the dispenser of knowledge to the ignorant little rustic masters and misses of our Sunday-school :—yes, Peter has repeatedly exorcised this inexorable spirit, and commanded it in the name of God to declare what it wanteth. Yet all to no purpose : for the spirit heedeth not his words, but continueth to exercise its pranks to the inexpressible terror of its astonished auditory.

It appears that a few nights ago, whether from some sneers and sarcasms which two or three bold-unbelievers in the village, against the most certain evidence of their neighbours' senses, had dared to throw out, the spirit was determined to impress the most awful conviction of the reality of the so-much-doubted visitation of supernatural agents on its hearers ; or whether enraged at not being addressed by the proper person, in the proper way, so that the charm of its silence might be broken, (for it seems these disembodied gentry are mighty punctilious), and its *vox terriloguous* put forth its wishes :—the apparition grew outrageous, and with many knockings, groanings, and scratchings so terrified the assembled party, that several hid their faces and stopped their ears ; some fell on their knees repeating the Lord's prayer and the commandments with more ear-

nestness than probably they had ever done before; whilst others lay flat on the ground, and shrieked and kicked, like poor wretches in Bedlam. Peter was tumbled down, the table was overturned, the candles put out, and the great Bible hurled no one could tell whither.

In the midst of this uproar, a man, considered by many to be deeply read in all kinds of conjuration, and able to raise the very diable himself, who had attended that evening and daringly volunteered to sit beside the haunted bed in the dark, with the intent to lay the "foul spirit," received, or thought he received, so violent a blow on the side of his head from the shadowy and immaterial arm of some unknown being, as sent him headlong down the staircase. Nay, it is even affirmed by some, that he saw an indescribable formless form, with a long black tail, wrapped in a blanket of fire, flit across the room as he tumbled down the stairs; for it seems he fell backwards head foremost, and consequently his eyes were gazing upward. Be that as it may, he was so terrified, that when he reached the bottom of the steps, he scrambled to the door, and away he ran. Unfortunately taking the path that led along by the side of an adjoining clay-pit, he saw by the red light of a volume of flame

at that moment issuing from a working brick-kiln, Old Nick himself, as he thought, rising from the mud at the bottom of the pit in a most terrific shape, with horns that extended to the sky. The poor wretch gave a piercing scream, and thinking he had done like many others, who, as John Bunyan poetically sings,

" To shun the fryingpan,
Do leap into the fire,"

turned instantly back ; when, woful to relate, either his foot slipped, or the mischievous demon dragged him down the treacherous steep, for in a few seconds he found himself up to his middle in mud and water at the bottom of the pit. With groans and cries he at last struggled out, and retreated back to the house of spectres. The sight of the conjurer returned, his tale of the devil rising enveloped in flame and smoke, and the pitiful state of his mud-bespattered clothes, spoke louder than a thousand witnesses ; and inspired such renewed terror to the remaining company, that they instantly dispersed in the utmost dismay and confusion.

Hearing the sad report of these woful doings, and receiving by special messenger a gracious request from Peter to attend the ghost-frighted

convocation, I determined one evening to visit the dreadful chamber. On my arrival at the house, I found a full and grave assembly, with Peter seated in the centre. The large Bible was spread before him on the table, and two rushlights burning near it. The boys were now led up to bed. On Peter's return, a dismal gloom hung on every countenance, and silence reigned almost unbroken, till the terrible signal was announced by one of the boys crying out, " 'Tis come, daddy." And come indeed it was: the thumps and the scratchings began really to be fearful. Peter stared, his daughters shook their heads and put on long faces. A female relation of the family, who had come a considerable distance to witness the return to earth of her uncle's troubled spirit, turned pale and kept as far as possible from the foot of the stairs. The oldest son grasped firmly the Bible, and casting his eyes towards the fatal chamber-door looked most ludicrously aghast. The old conjurer sat in one corner of the room, and pretended to look as fearless as St. Dunstan, when he took the devil by the nose with his red hot tongs: while the wife of Peter began to wring her hands and exclaim bitterly. In short, my friend, this scene was the richest of the kind I ever witnessed, and the inimitable pencil of a Hogarth could alone have done it justice.

While the "wo-begone" farce was acting above stairs and below, I requested admission to the haunted room. This was instantly granted, but not the use of a candle, as it was positively asserted that the ghost performed its operations only in the dark. In the dark then I ascended the staircase, found my way to the haunted bed, and sat on its side; but before I had reached it, the knocks and scratches had ceased, and a dead silence prevailed above and below. Here I sat in eager expectation of what was to follow, and presently to my great joy, the spectre recommenced its labours. But to wind up this long story, I felt as well as heard the boy who was in the bed, scratch it under me; and after several trials, found but the way by which he produced the knockings; played the ghost myself, and considerably increased the panic of the party below. Then thinking the scandalous humbug had been carried on long enough, exposed the whole plot, and relieved the astonished village from its nocturnal terrors.

It needs no ghost to tell us that Peter himself instructed the boy how to act, nor what were his motives for so doing. But I must conclude, and with the best wishes for your prosperity,

I continue ever yours,
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXXVI.

DEAR FRANK,

L— Cottage.

I HAVE received very bad intelligence from my booksellers in London. They write me that all their liberal brethren in the trade refused to subscribe for any copies of my poem, and that nearly the whole impression remains on their shelves. They say, too, that they have been unable to get it reviewed or noticed in any publication whatever, either weekly, monthly, or quarterly, with the single exception of the *Literary Gazette*, which has given a generous example to the many reviews of the day. Its Editor, with the true feelings of honourable literature, has endeavoured to awaken a general interest towards the poem, by favourably recommending it to the notice of the public, and giving several extracts. But is not, my friend, the silence of every other similar publication unwarrantably strange? I vainly imagined that so much liberality and love of genius, particularly when nobly struggling against the frowns of fortune, existed among the *literati* of this country, that a thousand learned friends would have eagerly stepped forward to bring my writings into notice, and the reviewers,

—those professed patronisers and encouragers of talent wherever found,—would have done me the honour to bring them before the public, to condemn where I have erred, and applaud whatever was worthy the approbation of their critical acumen. I foolishly thought that envy, injustice, and illiberality were confined to the walls of a theatre; but I now begin to perceive that men of literature, with all their fine feelings and their boastings, are also sadly subject to the pernicious influence of what the world calls “good and great,” and that the basest passions of the heart are the unworthy attendants of every profession. Of course there must be many splendid exceptions; but alas for me! it has been my sad lot to meet with few, very few such through life. A man of genius may perish miserably in obscurity as much now as in the days of Otway, and be cut off for ever from all his fondest hopes and aspirations, if some powerful patron come not forward to take him by the hand, and introduce him to the notice of the public: unless, indeed, he himself be so fortunate as to possess that which will bribe a minister of state to betray the secrets of the supreme council, and a judge on the bench of Apollo to deceive the public, and pronounce a decision on a literary work the direct reverse of that which it merits.

I have nearly completed the first part of a

second epic poem; and as the money which I obtained for my first is almost exhausted, I shall at Midsummer give a short vacation, go to town, and endeavour to obtain a purchaser for it among some of the booksellers. Your last informs me that you are about to embark for France, to prosecute your professional studies in the magnificent galleries of the Louvre. May you be successful, and return the Titian of England! If possible, I will so arrange before you embark for the continent, as to meet you in London, and once more spend with you a few happy days, if such days can be in store for me.

I am, as ever,

Yours most truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER LXXXVII.

From Messrs. P. and M. to Sylvaticus.

London.

DEAR SIR,

WE herewith return your MS., in the perusal of which we have been much delighted, and we beg to thank you for your politeness in giving us the refusal of it. We must however decline to become the purchasers, and in doing so we feel it due to you to state our reasons. You well know that the high opinion we entertained of your poetical abilities, induced us to print your former poem, notwithstanding we had never intended to engage in works of that description; and although we have not been remunerated by the sale, it is but candid to declare to you that our opinion of its merits not only remains the same, but has been amply confirmed by the opinions of some of the first literary characters to whom we have shown it. Its failure, then, must be attributed to the circumstance of our being quite out of the line of such publications, (con-

fining ourselves to school-books), and not having given it sufficient publicity by means of advertising. Had it been in the hands of Longman, Murray, Cadell, or many others whose more immediate province it is to publish works of this class, we think it would have succeeded, because a proper attention would have been bestowed in giving it notoriety, independent of the sale that would have been secured through their own connexion.

If, therefore, such reasons were a bar to the success of the former work, you will doubtless agree with us that they hold good with respect to the present one; though we are ready to admit, that the subject of the latter is more agreeable to the public taste than a portion of sacred history, however well versified or adorned with poetic imagery. Still, for the reasons before assigned, we think it advisable for your interests as well as our own, that we should at once decline it. We are truly anxious that every encouragement should be given to your labours; and any thing that we can say or do, towards the furtherance of your object with any other party, we shall do most readily. We consider it unfortunate that you have not a more extensive literary acquaintance; but we really think that

if you bestir yourself, and take advantage of the good offices of such as you have, you may get an introduction to some respectable publisher; who, confiding in the judgment of those gentlemen who have given your performances such unqualified praise, will undertake the present publication on liberal terms, and perhaps be anxious to have the future productions of your Muse. With the best wishes,

We remain, dear sir,

Very truly yours,

P—— and M——.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

London.

MY DEAR MARIA,

I AM very sorry to commence with a declaration that I have no good news to send you ; but it cannot be longer concealed from you, that I have in vain tried to obtain a purchaser for my MS. poem of — among the London publishers. These lordlings of literary merchandise all turn up their sapient noses at me, and refuse with a disdainful brow the efforts of my village pen. Nay, some will not even honour me with an interview ; but I am told that is nothing new, as one or two of these bookselling gentry never condescend to a personal interview with an author, unless he waits on them in a carriage. Messrs. P. and M. my late publishers, behave very kindly to me ; but as they have been so unsuccessful with my last publication, I cannot expect they will undertake a new one of nearly the same caste.

I am so weary with going from place to place, and all to no purpose, so sick with continued

disappointment and vexation, that were it not for you, my dear little Edwin, and my beloved and widowed mother, how gladly would I enlist as a common soldier for the East Indies, for any country or clime so I could quit my own, which has been to me so unpropitious, inhospitable, and cruel. Ah, could I but once leave its bated shores with you, to whom I am so closely united, never, never should I again breathe a sigh for that land which unfortunately gave me birth,—that vaunted land, in which I have known nothing but injurious despoil, injustice, and infelicity!

“Twere sweet to lie on desert land,
 Or where some lone and barren strand
 Hears the Pacific waters roll,
 And views the stars of southern pole!
 Twere best to live where forests stretch,
 Beyond fell man’s deceitful reach;
 Where hills on hills proud rising tower,
 And native groves each wild embower;
 Whose rocks but echo to the howl
 Of wandering beast, or clang of fowl!”

These are not, Maria, the whinings of a morbid sensibility and affectation, as you but too well know. These are not the idle complainings of a bard, who enjoys titles and honours, and rolls in

all the luxury and pomp of wealth, on whom the literary homage of an idolizing world waits to feed his insatiable vanity, and whose publications though many are panders to vice and licentiousness, the whole herd of sycophant reviewers crowd on each others heels to laud, admire, and puff off with their brazen trumpets to the very end of the earth, while many of them fawn upon their castigator like a beaten spaniel. These are not the pseudo wailings of a self-exiled poet, visiting in splendour and ease and surrounded by a train of obsequious slaves, the interesting and inspiring remains of classic antiquity, wandering on the beautiful shores of the land of ancient heroic song, and literally gathering flowers for the garlands of his poesy on the very brows of Parnassus and Olympus, while he bathed his forehead in the real fountain of the Castalides. No: mine are the genuine sorrows of one, who has known nothing but disappointment and who has the prospect before him of soon wanting a crust of bread;—who, if he wanders abroad, must pine in indigence, misery, and contempt,—friendless and without hope in this world. Forgive my writing thus, only to impart to you trouble; but it unburthens my oppressed

mind, and affords me something like momentary ease.

I resume my letter to tell you, that my late publishers, acquainted with the total failure of those hopes which led me again to London, have agreed to give me a small sum per sheet for a little volume of *Juvenile Poems*, which I am on my return to compose. I am likewise to write a *Tragedy*, for which they consider my style of composition well adapted: this piece they will present to Drury-Lane, and use every interest they can possibly make to get it brought out this coming season. You may therefore expect me very shortly once more at the hermitage.

I am, dear Maria,

Your affectionate

Sylvaticus.

LETTER LXXXIX.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

I AM happy to hear of your safe arrival at Paris, and of the advance you make in your professional pursuits. I should have written long before, if I had had anything but misery to impart.

On my return to *L——*, after we separated in London, what was my surprise to find that the master of the Roman Catholic charity-school in this village, from whom two or three Protestant children had been removed to be placed with me, had during my absence thrown open his school free to all sects: and instigated by a spirit of revenge and opposition to me, had meanly solicited the parents of my pupils to send them to him. This was indeed a heavy blow: and now the climax of my disappointments and wretchedness was wrought up to the height of despair;—the cup of misery seemed filled to the brim.

This man, Frank, was a navy lieutenant, and had been recently appointed to this school, never before open to any but Catholic children. He

received half-pay from Government, and had a fixed and respectable salary for these his new duties. Added to this, a good house, fuel, and k  ep for a cow were provided him free of expense, with many advantages besides. Yet was he not content with all this: he strove to take from me the little bread of sorrow which I had left to supply the cravings of hunger, and but too well succeeded; while his triumph seemed complete, when he had driven me and my little family to the very verge of absolute want and misery!

I soon lost nearly all my pupils, and, broken-hearted and spiritless, fell almost into the stupor of despair. But one night, as I lay ruminating on my sleepless pillow, I fancied I heard some one bid me to arise, shake off the lethargy of grief, and exert my abilities. I leaped from my bed, and paced to and fro the room. Suddenly the Tragedy, which I was to write, started to my mind. I formed the greater part of the plot of E—— that night, and the next day sat down to write. I composed day and night: never did I experience so great a flow of imagination. I finished the piece in five weeks.

Having submitted it to the perusal of a friend of mine, a good, sound critic, I have received from him the following letter, which I copy for your

perusal, as I know such things interest and afford you pleasure.—

“DEAR SIR,

I have perused your play, yet in so cursory a manner, (for want of time) as to be scarcely able at present to give you a decided opinion of its merits. But as you expressed yourself desirous of hearing something from me, I will note down all so hasty a reading allowed to occur.

The language is generally good, and in very many instances excellent: your plot is simple, and unexpectedly winds itself to an interesting climax; and with the aid of a good representation, I should think would not fail to attract and interest. The part of E——f is most striking, and I cannot help observing that it is particularly well calculated for Kean; and in the event of its being brought out at “good old Drury,” if he should feel disposed to give it the assistance of his powerful talents, is perhaps alone sufficient to command success. E——a is likewise an excellent part, not a whit inferior to the proud Ratt. Master L——a is strikingly well served.

Having thus briefly noticed some of the beauties of your piece, I must as candidly refer you to what, in my humble opinion, may be called its defects; which, while I suppose such to exist, are so few and so completely eclipsed by the superior (refulgence of their opposites, as not to call for particular notice, except as

in a confidential communication from a friend anxious for its success. And if we can thereby contrive to rob criticism of its venom, we may fearlessly meet its effects, however vindictively directed.

In the first place, I am fearful you have much exceeded the usual length of a tragedy,—I mean in the number of lines,—and perhaps this may be dangerous. Your use of *expletives* is rather too frequent; and if I do not mistake, the same idea obtrudes itself a second time. These are faults, however, which may easily be remedied by a careful revision. We often see, upon the representation of a successful piece, the second performance announced with the observation, that “a judicious curtailment” has removed some defects, and cemented more closely its several beauties. Now if this could be effected at once, why all the better, and with this view, I have marked a few passages. May not, also, some of the long speeches of A——e be curtailed with advantage? There seems a sameness in some of them, that although abstractedly good, would well bear the operation of the pruning knife. With regard to E——r, I think it would be more dramatic for him to fall as a sacrifice to the cruel rites of the Danes, than to return merely to die by his own hand. And as he does not come early enough to catch even the last faint sigh of his love, nor contribute at all to the interest of the grand catastrophe, I do not see why the luxury of stabbing himself should be reserved to him. His father then may be suffered to destroy him-

self in an agony of disappointed ambition ; or, perhaps better still, to fall by the hand of the injured G——n. An audience could not sympathise with *his* feelings ; but E——r's tame death might prove a drawback to an otherwise high-wrought finish.

A reference to the manuscript will render my remarks more intelligible to you. Excuse the freedom of my pen, which has been influenced only by a sincere desire to serve you. I shall soon expect to hear something satisfactory from you, and in the mean time

I remain, dear sir,

Yours truly,

G—— C——, Jr."

During the writing of this Tragedy, I was driven to the greatest straits, and resolved to disclose my case to the Rev. Dr. D—— of W——. With a fatherly kindness he pitied my situation, revised my Tragedy, and promised to speak to some friends respecting my distress. But I know not how it happened, he was always disappointed, and could obtain no assistance for me, while I had the toil and expense of several long journeys added to my other misfortunes.

My Tragedy completed, I posted off to Messrs. P. and M., who took it, together with many letters highly recommendatory of my poem to Elliston,*

* These letters I have never been able to get back again.

the then manager of Drury-Lane. After waiting six long weeks in the utmost anxiety, the following note from Mr. Elliston was sent to me through my late publishers:

T. R. B. L.

"The management of Drury-Lane feels indebted to the author of:— for the perusal of his Tragedy: it is written with a highly accomplished classic pen, but neither the plot or incidents are considered sufficiently striking, to warrant its production on the boards of Drury-Lane Theatre."

This was another deep pang added to the miseries of genius: and to make it felt the more, this very house was, and is now, dragging before the public such new pieces as are neglected and condemned by the audience as fast as they appear, and execrated as the vilest trash by all the men of letters and taste in the metropolis.*—So much for the judgment of these sapient managers!

There now appeared not the smallest hope or possibility of my remaining any longer here. I had finished my little volume of poems for youthful minds, and I determined by the advice of Dr.

* If this be doubted, let the reader refer to the *Magnesian* and literary papers of the day, for their criticisms on *Drury-Lane Virginius*, *David Rissie*, and other theatrical humbugs.

D. once more to try the London booksellers with another poem* and my rejected Tragedy, and if both failed, as it was very probable they would, the Dr. recommended me very strongly, by letter, to the patronage of Dr. Bell, begging him to procure me a situation in one of his schools.

Another painful scene of parting I had to encounter with my wife, my child, and my mother. I knew not when, nor under what circumstances, I should again behold them! But I will not dwell upon the melancholy subject. I had, as I thought, an everlasting farewell to my native village, an eternal adieu to my peaceful home. O, how dear did that home then appear to me! The very flowers and shrubs which I had planted around my little hermitage, seemed to me like old and dear-loved friends, from whom I was taking a final leave, and about to resign for ever to the possession of strangers. With what sadness did I turn back to take a last parting view of my native valley from a distant hill, that romantic retreat of peace and sweet retirement.

"Where I had hoped to spend
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
That must be mortal to me,"

* This poem has never yet made its appearance.

and to which a thousand ties seemed to bind me so strongly, that I had not fortitude as I cast "a longing lingering look behind" on its whitened cottages, its pleasant groves, its Celtic entrenchments, its village tower, and castle battlements, to prevent myself from bursting into a flood of tears. I felt envious of the happy peasants who dwelt in its embowering shades, with bosoms never racked by those wounds which misfortune and neglect had inflicted on mine, and who reposed in peace and happiness in the cottages where their fathers dwelt before them; while I was compelled by the ruthless fiends of misery and want, to wander a pining exile far from all I loved.

Again I reached London, and again I pursued the same course with the booksellers, and with the same success. Mr. Murray, per note, was sorry my poem did not suit him. Longman and Co. disdainfully returned the MSS. as if they were unworthy to remain under their roof, though backed by the repeated recommendations of Mr. Warner of Bath, a gentleman well known for his erudition and valuable writings in the republic of letters. Baldwin would not give me the trouble to call again, it being no use to leave any papers, as poetry had seen its day and was now

getting quite out of fashion, except short pieces which were luxuriously voluptuous, or blasphemously libellous. By the head of the house of Taylor and Hessey, I was most politely told that my MSS. had been read by one of the firm, and found to contain no real poetry, not a single specimen of genuine talent; and that even if they had, the work would be of no use to them, unless in accordance with the taste of the present day I could prove myself to be an absolute clown, and some great character would take upon him to assert that I had no more education or manners than a coal-heaver: gentlemen's poetry was of no use in the present day, and therefore they could not think of publishing mine. Mr. Colburn was fairly frightened at the title of an epic poem, and one in blank verse too. No, it would not do; the taste of the age utterly neglected and condemned all such obsolete stuff, and whatever its merits might be, it would never answer to publish it. Well, thought I, might Macpherson say, "Were my aim to gain the many, I would write a madrigal sooner than an heroic poem. Laberius himself would be always sure of more followers than Sophocles." Whittakers were overwhelmed with MSS. of all kinds; and Westley had already

made choice of such new works as he intended to publish for the next twelvemonth.

As I wandered along the streets, disconsolately reflecting on the continued miseries modern genius is doomed to endure, I unexpectedly met Mr. K——, an enterprising young man, whom I had frequently met at Messrs. P. and M's. He informed me that he was about to commence bookseller, in partnership with a gentleman who had plenty of money; that they intended to publish a literary periodical, and should be glad to engage me as a constant contributor, and likewise to purchase any work I had in hand, or might at any future period produce. This, you will say, my friend, was like a gleam of sunshine through the storm,—a deliverance to the shipwrecked sailor,—a reprieve to the condemned prisoner!

He almost instantly agreed to purchase my Poem and Tragedy; for which he was to pay a certain sum in advance; and I was also to receive a third share of the profits. I placed the MSS. in his hands, and received eleven pounds as a first payment, with which I once more *con amore* returned to L——, in full confidence of receiving, whenever I wanted it, the residue left in his hands.

Thus you see, my dear friend, that although my school, through the designs of an unjust and unmerited enemy, is almost wholly taken from me, Providence has, after many fresh and severe trials, saved me from despair, and unexpectedly restored me to my happy home, and the affectionate arms of my beloved family.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XC.

L—— Cottage.

O MY FRIEND,

THE bitterness of misery again is mine, and the cup of unutterable anguish overflows ! Month after month has past away, but neither letter nor money have I been able to obtain from that deceiver K. since my return to L——. Surely a decree has gone forth against me, that nothing which I do shall prosper ; that no attempt of mine to gain an honourable maintenance for myself and family shall succeed ! I have lost all confidence in Heaven, and seem marked out as an object for the shafts of Divine displeasure ! One only last resource is left me on earth, and that is death ! Yes, my friend, a speedy death ! that I may escape the slow pangs of dying by hunger, and the still more excruciating agonies of seeing my little family perish with want before my eyes !

To whom can I appeal for pity ? No one in this county, however blest with power, authority, and riches, has ever bestowed one single smile of encouragement on my long and toilsome efforts

to attain that honest fame, which attends the successful sons of the Muses; or taken any more notice of me or my poetic effusions, than of the moonlight hootings of the cloistered owl, or the midnight baying of the cottager's dog! To whom can I look for mercy, when all the leading men of literature,—the dispensers of justice in those courts where the Arts, the Sciences, and the Muses stand for judgment,—have closed upon me the avenues to public notice, and haughtily disdained to admit a single word respecting my epic poem into their sublime pages!*

No, Frank: to me there seems neither hope nor mercy left on earth. Solemnly, I think this is the last time you will ever hear from your wretched friend. When I am dead, and this poor aching heart shall cease to beat, O, if possible, do justice to my memory. God eternally bless you; and O, that you may never, never feel the agonies which I endure! My wife, my aged mother!—O, I shall quickly drag her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. And what will become of my dear boy? Is there no heart that will have mercy on him, when I am gone? Must

* A Doctor of Divinity, an ornament to the Church, of the soundest erudition and refined taste, wrote a review on my epic poem for the *British Critic*,—but it was refused insertion.

he feel the gripe of hard-hearted parish officers? must he be driven forth at his tender years to earn a scanty crust by the sweat of his brow? he whom I had hoped to live to see blest with learning and talent? he whom I so tenderly doated on? O, that those whom I love should suffer for my misfortunes; that I should be compelled to entail yet deeper afflictions upon them! Surely the measure of my sufferings must be full! O, that I could speak to you but for one short hour! It cannot be,

Mine is no romantic passion, that hurries me to the blood-drenched precipice of suicide. No: it is misery,—deep, lasting misery,—beyond the darkness of which I see no dawning ray, no hope of relief but in the grave! I may say with Ossian, “Why dost thou awake me, O gale? It seems to say, I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come; he that saw me in my beauty shall come: his eyes shall search the field, but they will not find me.” I can write no more. My child! my mother! I am wild, lost! God have mercy on me! what, O, what shall I do!

Adieu, adieu!

LETTER XCI.

From the Rev. Mr. Allport to Sylvaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR SIR,

It was with extreme grief that I read yours of the 10th instant, and especially in the contemplation of the consequences of your distress which it seems to indicate ; but which I earnestly hope, for your soul's sake, you will by the mercy and grace of God, be prevented from realizing. Remember the words once addressed to one in a state of desperation, "Do thyself no harm;" and consider it not only your duty to forbear from any rash act, but also from injuring (what you have no *right* to injure in any way) yourself, by the indulgence of excessive grief. Consider the encouragements of that God who has said, "Call upon me in the time of trouble ; I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Consider that he is a very present help in trouble. Go to him, and confide in him ; and especially look to that Redeemer, who endured seeing him who is invisible. Put your cause into his hands, and

flee to him for succour and safety, who is mighty to save; and who, having experienced grievous temptations, is able to succour them that are tempted.

I assure you at first I knew not what to do for you, being wholly unable to afford you any assistance myself, and having no prospect of procuring any. But to-day, my release from some imperious and pressing engagements enabling me to go out a little, I waited on two friends and made known your situation to them, who instantly furnished me wherewith to send you the enclosed five pounds. I hope it will prove a little seasonable relief. I shall endeavour to do what else I can to serve you. May God uphold your spirits,—preserve you from temptation,—raise up friends to help you suitably, and be your consolation through life,—and your exceeding great and precious portion here and for ever.

You will have the goodness to acknowledge the receipt of this, and I hope I shall find, too, that you have found relief from your present distress by help from some other quarter. With my best wishes and prayers,

I remain, in great haste,

Yours truly,

J. ALLPORT.

LETTER XCII.

From the Rev. Mr. Allport to Sylvaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM truly happy in having it in my power to send you another £5. of which I shall thank you to certify me of the safe arrival by return of post, and at the same time inform me of some particulars relative to your having had a small school, which you slightly mentioned when here. An all-wise Providence, I trust, led you to Chippenham, and has lately in a very remarkable manner befriended me, and opened ways to serve you ; so that I can inform you there is more cash in our bankers' hands for your use, and such an interest excited, here and at Bath in your favour, that I trust, ere long, I shall have to send you an account that will prove there are those who possess the heart of the good Samaritan, and convey to you some efficient aid. My dear partner begs to unite in kind regards. I am, most sincerely yours,

J. ALLPORT.

LETTER XCIII.

From the Rev. Mr. Allport to Sykeaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yours came to hand this evening, just after a trip to Bath on your account. I lose no time in writing, to beg you will not at present press K— further. I have to-day accidentally met the man who was the means of bringing Elhston forward at Bath,—I mean Mr. Meyler; and he says, he thinks he has not forgotten it, and would now listen to him. He will wait to town to make the trial. May he succeed! The trial from such a quarter can do no harm, and your Tragedy may be recovered. At all events it cannot injure you much to wait a little and see. To convince you of this, I have the very great happiness to inform you that I have now £80. for you,—I mean exclusive of what I have already sent you. Thank God and not me. Surely it was His good Providence led you to me this time two years. It is He that has opened door after door for me this last fortnight, to serve you. To Him be all

the praise and all the thanks. If you owe any thing, or want a few more pounds at present to purchase anything to advantage, let me know, and I will remit you any part immediately. But if you have no particular wish, it may as well remain. Your friends will study how what can be raised for you, if it increase, can best be applied to your benefit.

As soon as ever I possibly can, I purpose trying what can be effected with the editor of the *British Review*. Should you have any particular wish to try elsewhere, let me know directly. If not, I am not without hopes of succeeding there, and it is a most respectable, and I think truly impartial review.

You must not be surprised at finding your case made public. I read a great deal about you to-day to my own surprise (but agreeably so) in the *West of England Miscellany*, printed at Sherborne. There was no other way of rescuing you from wretchedness, and bringing you into that notice essential to you, and due to the public. May the Lord bless and comfort you, dispel all your griefs, remedy every ill, and speedily cause all your hopes to be realized. All I ask is your prayers, and I hope to remain

Yours very truly,

JOSIAH ALLPORT.

LETTER XCIV.

From the Rev. Mr. Allport to Sylvaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR —,

I HAVE delayed writing in reply to your last, in order to be able to make up my mind on two or three points, which I could not do till I found how a few other circumstances would turn up here. I could have written you immediately to state what I would have you do in regard to your publishing —; but for your own satisfaction I wish to have good grounds to back my opinion. My advice is, do every thing you can to get the MS. in your own hands, and take the publication upon yourself. I would be answerable for the immediate payment of the £11. to K—, and I hope ere long to have sufficient to enable you to go to press yourself. I have £50. in hand for you, besides what you have had, and £5. I now send you. This last week I have formed a kind of committee on your behalf, of which Archdeacon Fisher will be an agent. I

have a statement, and extracts, and an appeal coming out of press, of which I return the proof sheet corrected to-day, under their management, for the express purpose of the benefit of the author of the *R— M—*, to relieve his necessities, to assist him in bringing forward unpublished works, to procure him some necessary and suitable books, and in the hope of saving him from the recurrence of the distress and misery he has endured.

It has been my endeavour to put your case in its full light, and to place your merits upon their proper grounds. Several friends warmly interested in your behalf, have undertaken to circulate the statement in their respective circles, and to do their utmost to serve you. It is my purpose also to send copies of the statement to my bookseller in London, Seeley; to booksellers in Monmouth, Gloucester, Ross, Abergavenny, and others to whom I am known; and through friends to those in Worcester, Birmingham, and York: and I shortly hope to be able to complete every thing that can be done for you, and to raise something that shall afford some compensation for your past toil, disappointment, and sufferings. Many copies of the *R— M—* have been sold here and at Bath lately; and as the latter fills, on the com-

ming season, I have no doubt many more will, as the interest is increasing, and almost all the libraries have taken up your cause.

Now you had better, I think, communicate these particulars to your former publishers, either at once in confidence, or by degrees, as you will judge best from your knowledge of them. I see on two copies I had from Town last week, they have now put *The Second Edition* on the labels of the R— M—. I am glad, very glad now, I did not urge K—, as you wished me, to bring out your pieces. I only hope during the time that has elapsed he has not gone to press, and you may be able to recover them. Looking over a London catalogue of books, I do not see his name from beginning to end. I am trying to get the book you named; and my next step will be to see if we cannot interest the reviewers,—some by one means, some by another: the *British Critic* through Dr. Fisher.

Have you any copies of the R— M— by you on your own account? If so, Mr. Meyler, *Herald Office*, Bath, would wish you to send some to him on sale, conceiving it might serve you.

Having now said all I think is requisite, and being pressed for time, I must conclude, remaining

Faithfully yours,

JOSIAH ALLPORT.

LETTER XCV.

From the celebrated Mrs. Fordyce to the late
Mr. Meyler of Bath, publisher of the
BATH HERALD.*

O, good Mr. Meyler! God will surely bless you for the zeal on your part in succouring this man of merit,—whose wonderful modesty is quite striking. I am grieved I did not see you to-night, when you called and favoured me with the two letters, which I will carefully copy, and show my Mentor of a friend (Mr. Duncan) who is already in search, and no man will be of more importance to the unfortunate; for his benevolence is equal to his penetration, and his polished taste never errs in criticism.

When you, sir, did my door the honour of a call, I was at the moment writing a note to you, very earnest, to prevent your inserting my name for so paltry a sum as the balance of the ten-pound bank bill, being only seventeen shillings.

* The life of this lady, written with considerable ability, was some time since published by Hurst, Robinson, and Co.

Here, sir, I enclose you ten pounds for the sole benefit of this man. Resting on the information of that most worthy clergyman, Mr. Allport, we are *safe* and *sure* we are not imposed on by releasing this genius from oppression. My donation, with what he will otherwise get, will enable him to quit his present little school, which a man much *his* inferior may conduct. Advise him to come to Bath. Tell him there is a house there, with a parlour and a bed chamber in all respects quite comfortable, dry, well aired: that there is in the style of neat sobriety, a *sufficient* dinner on table every day at four o'clock: that the mistress of the house loves nothing so much as seclusion, books, and men of talents who have conjoined that becoming piety which occasionally appears in Mr. ——. I am glad he has a wife, in the hope she has a heart worthy of such a husband. She will take care of him, and I will take care of both while under my roof, where they will have no cares, and plenty of books,—no check on the Muses. The recluse mistress of the house will never trouble them till dinner is on the table, for being eighty-five years of age, she always breakfasts in bed,—not from an inclination to loiter, but that it enables her to hold out through the day, when the detail of her

small establishment is somewhat the better for being personally directed.

It would be the ruin of such a man to be in London or Bath, without a house to receive him *gratis*. But I have a great desire to know what kind of person his wife is. Such an inquiry, dear sir, is of importance in taking people under one's roof. Such geniuses do not always match prudently. Yet he expresses a tender solicitude about her, which he could not do if he knew her to be unworthy. We will hope the best.

I have too long intruded on your time, as I know it is of much importance, and will only add I should be very happy to see *you* under my roof, who have been so long justly in my *esteem* in concurrence with the public. May prosperity and peace attend you ! Such is the prayer of,

Dear sir,

Your most obedient servant,

HENRIETTA FORDYCE.

LETTER XCVI.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

To ease your extreme anxiety, I write to inform you that I am in the land of the living, and almost miraculously delivered from all my miseries. I felt I could not die, without first letting my dear friend Mr. Allport, of whom I have spoken to you before, know my sufferings, which I thought would plead a strong excuse for the rash and wilful act I was on the very point of executing. The goodness, the benevolence of this true Samaritan, who so kindly soothed my sorrows, and poured balm into my bleeding wounds, is beyond all praise; and should my heart ever cease to remember him with the liveliest gratitude, esteem, and respect, I must become a very wretch indeed. He has raised up numerous friends for me, who have contributed very considerable sums to release me from embarrassment; and through him I have returned K—— the money which he advanced on my MSS. and got them again in my own possession. I must do him the justice to

believe, from what I have heard through my late publishers, that misfortune alone was the cause of his not fulfilling his engagements with me. It is my benevolent friend's advice, that I print the Tragedy on my own account, my former book-sellers having consented to be my publishers on liberal terms.

He says in his last letter to me, "I deem it so desirable that something should come out just now to keep the flame alive, or to add fuel to that which is kindled, that I advise your acceptance of Messrs. P—— and M——'s terms. I deem you speak only of your Tragedy. Your other poem I would have kept back. Let us proceed now, if we can, by those steps that will secure an easy, certain, and advantageous ascent. If your Tragedy sell well, and I do believe it will now, you very soon, I am persuaded, will have some handsome offer for your Poem. In the meantime revise it, and make it as perfect as possible. Messrs. P. and M. shall have an early remittance of £10. to stimulate them to advertise your Tragedy well. Mr. Lisle Bowles has sent you a remittance after reading your work, and expresses himself very warmly about it. I have not heard a word from Archdeacon Fisher, at which I am much surprised, as he informed me

by letter in which he inclosed a pound, to be added to what your friends are endeavouring to raise for you, that he would join any committee to serve you, and if you published by subscription would add his name, use his interest with his friends, and be happy to render you any assistance in his power, which I might please to point out."

Be thankful with me, my dear friend, to that Providence which has done such wonders for me, and worked a way for my deliverance when and where I least expected it. I may say that these my kind friends are fully realizing towards me the wishes of Buchanan, expressed in the following beautiful lines, which I send you translated from the Latin of that author.

" With violets, fragrant herbs, let none presume,
To crown the summit of my lowly tomb ;
Nor grace the spot where my remains are laid,
With the tall pyramid's majestic shade.

Rather let him, whose proffered love would claim
The festive honours of fair friendship's name,
WHILE LIFE REMAINS each kind attention show,
And ere too late, what friendship asks bestow.

For when the shears of fate have cleft in twain—
Embittering thought—sweet life's delusive chain,
I care not then should thorns their blossoms shed,
Mid the wide ruins of my charnel bed."

LETTER XCVII.

From the Rev. Mr. Allport to Sybaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE written to your London publisher, and directed him to call at a banker's in town for £10., to be applied as you suggested in advertisements: I also endeavoured so to write him, as to excite him to activity and effort in your behalf.

I have the inexpressible pleasure to inform you, that the attention of several persons in and about town has been warmly interested in your welfare; and two of them,—eminent literary characters,—have sent to me for some information respecting your early life. One is Mr. Britton, a native of this county, (Wilts,) the well known author of *Cathedral Antiquities*: the other Mr. Sharon Turner, author of that admirable *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, &c. Now these two gentlemen, with some others, have offered to introduce you to the Literary

Society in town, and try to procure you assistance from that noble and praiseworthy establishment. In addition to the information with which I have furnished them, they wish that a short account of your early years should be drawn up and sent to them. Now I am perfectly of the same opinion; and if you have no objection, draw up the narrative as speedily as possible.

An Institution is about to be established on a grand scale, under the patronage and authority of the king,—something like the Royal Academy, for the aid and encouragement of literary talent. The Rev. Mr. Bowles has spoken to me about endeavouring to serve you, by your being made a member of that Society. At a meeting of the members of a book-club in this neighbourhood lately, Mr. L. Bowles was asked by the Marquis of Lansdowne, to whom I wrote concerning you, for his opinion of your work; which he freely gave in such terms as fully confirmed my own, and greatly strengthened my efforts to serve you. I have written to Mr. Meyler three times, about applying to Elliston, but he gives no answer: he has been lately very much afflicted with the gout, and is an old man. A gentleman in this neighbourhood lately published a poem. He got it reviewed in the *Edinburgh*. The next week, he

received an offer from a bookseller of £400. for any thing he had in hand, or could produce, good, bad, or indifferent. Having something ready, he immediately accepted the offer. In about ten days more, he received another offer of £600. and the next day, a third of £700. both couched in the same terms. So you see what is done by these reviews! I hope P. and M. will bring out your small volume of poems directly. Barry Cornwall, who is the fortunate bard that received the above offers from the London booksellers, is now spoken of as bringing out a Tragedy, which is exciting great interest, and will immediately be performed.

Now, my dear friend, I hope and beg, in justice to yourself and family, that you will not abstain from those necessary comforts which your present prospects will justify you in procuring. I trust the clouds, the wintry blasts at any rate, are all past and gone. Of one thing you may rest assured, that I will never shrink from what I have begun, as long as I can do the least service. I consider it a duty entailed upon me by God. I think I have but just begun, and will leave no stone that I can move unturned, obscure as I am, even in the road to Royal patronage. But still we must proceed with care and prudence, and soon, I trust, you will not want my feeble aid.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Britton, to whom I sent a copy of your poem, thanking me for it; and saying, that from what he had read, you appeared to him "to possess very high talents, and such as require only to be known to be appreciated and well rewarded." After some further remarks he says, "I fear the author has not been fortunate in getting known; for though I am personally known to, and often converse with most of our first-rate poets, though I am pretty generally acquainted with the novelties of literature, I never heard of the poem in question, till Mr. Gaby brought it to my notice. Being now, however, introduced to the poem, to the cause, and to you as the kind friend of the author, I hope it will be in my power to serve one, and gratify all." He then goes on to propose the employment of ten copies of your work, and requests further particulars respecting you, that he may lay your case before the committee of the Literary Society, of which he is a member.

A Mr. Moore, a brother I believe of the late lamented Sir John Moore, has written twice about you: his last letter, after perusing your poem, is full of praise; and although he finds some faults, he expresses astonishment and delight. He has put it into the hands of the

poet Rogers, and offers to assist your cause in any way that he possibly can.

I shall conclude my letter by sending you a few lines from the last *Literary Gazette*, respecting the establishment of the new Royal Literary Institution, which is designed to give protection, encouragement, and honour to genius. It may suggest something useful, and show you what a cheering prospect there is before you.

“ It is remarkable how little the higher literature has mingled itself in the disturbances of late years. The country has been in great agitation; the minor agents of mischief have been busied in dismantling, fragment by fragment, the constitution; the war on morals and the healthful allegiance of the English mind, has been desperate and unrelaxing; it has come, like the battle of the Trojans with its tumultuous array, trampling and triumphing to the very trench: but no magnificent Champion has been roused from his indolence, and come forth; no Achilles has flung down his idle lyre, and shouted and turned the day. The battle has been nobly fought in the senate, great ability has been united with great zeal, and there it has conquered. But the true place of combat is without the walls of the legislature. It is in the fields, the market-places, and highways, and dwellings of the multitude. And this battle must be fought, not by the sword, nor even by the tongue; but

by the pen. The few poets who have taken a part in the heat of the day, have been on the *disaffected* side; and have, to the disgust of all good men, and the disgrace of their art, levelled their chief attacks at the individual, to whom duty and feeling should have offered their first homage.....There is no exaggeration in this belief of the potency of even the gentler literature. History is crowded with the examples of the wonders of popular poetry; factions have been beaten down, and thrones sustained by its vigour. In all the great commotions of states, the presence of literature has instantly been felt.....What mute, inglorious Miltons may be summoned from the mountain and the valley!"

That you may be soon acknowledged one of these Miltons, and receive that high patronage which now seems preparing for you, is the sincere and ardent wish of

Your constant friend,

J. ALLPORT.

LETTER XCVIII.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

I AM sure you will greatly rejoice, when I tell you that I have received twenty pounds through Mr. Britton, voted to me by the members of the Literary Society. Why then there are noble characters yet left in the world, who feel and act like men ; —nay, like the Saviour of men himself, who when on earth went about doing good, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases.

Mr. Britton says, in his letter to Mr. Allport, that he will also try to obtain some favourable reports of my poem in some of the reviews. I have endeavoured to express, but O, how feebly ! my eternal acknowledgments to these numerous friends, whom Providence has so wonderfully raised up for me : but there is no language that can possibly do justice to my feelings ; for I, who have met with so little kindness, and so much contempt and cruelty through all the weary pilgrimage of my life, am overwhelmed with astonishment, with thankfulness to God, and gratitude to man,—gratitude which never to the

latest hour of my existence can be obliterated from the tablets of my memory.

It is in the contemplation of some of my friends, to re-purchase the copyright of my poem from P—— and M——, as they consider that the work will now have an extensive sale, and be of considerable advantage to me. This I shall leave to their judgment. But is it not strange that I hear nothing from those publishers?

Mr. Allport tells me in the same letter by which I received the twenty-pound note, "I am much pleased, I assure you, with your Tragedy. I have taken some pains and time to compare it with copious extracts given in the *Literary Gazette* of yesterday from Barry Cornwall's, about which there has been lately such fine puffing. Mrs. A. has done the same with me, and we are decidedly in favour of yours; which, if we have any competency of judgment, exceeds the other far in interest. I have sent it to two of my female friends, great admirers of poetry, who eulogize its merits highly."

I am happy to hear that you are daringly copying one of the first pictures in the gallery of the Louvre,—Titian's *Holy Family*. That you may be highly successful, is the earnest wish of

Your faithful friend,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER XCIX.

From Mr. M—— to Sylvaticus.

Strand, London.

DEAR SIR,

I have received two letters from your excellent friend, the Rev. Mr. Allport, which contain the best of all possible proofs that you have some zealous friends interesting themselves in your behalf. By an order on Mr. A.'s banker, I have received 10*l.*, which he requests may be applied in advertising your Tragedy and Poem. This shall, of course, be done the moment you furnish me with the prices, dates of publication, &c. ; for, although you speak as if I were already instructed on this head, I do not remember to have received any directions of the kind.

As you appear so anxious to have my opinion of your tragedy, I will endeavour to give it without bias. I read the MS. with attention before it was sent to Mr. Elliston, and I recollect that, when he returned it, he complimented the author on its being classically written, but

said that neither the plot nor the incidents were considered sufficiently striking for the boards of Drury. I looked on Elliston's note as a mere matter of theatrical formality—a civil excuse for returning the MS. *unread*. The judgment I formed of "Ethelwolf," was the very reverse of what the manager had pronounced it: the plot appeared to me natural and unencumbered, many of the situations seemed exceedingly well contrived, and the incidents sufficiently striking; while the language was in general dramatic and highly poetical. On the whole, perhaps, it abounds with too much of the descriptive *for the stage*, and, therefore, a little pruning might be of service, particularly in curtail- ing some of the long speeches in the first act. The character of *Elwina*, I think, is excellently drawn and well kept up, and, in the hands of such an actress as Mrs. West, it could not fail to tell admirably. But it is a tragedy that requires the aid of *several* good performers to insure its success. You have not hung all the bells on one horse, which, I am told, it is indispensable to do, in order to insure powerful support behind the curtain; for, unless the lion of the day has all the best points reserved for himself, an author's chance of success is very problematical.

I beg to add, that I am truly happy to hear of your good fortune; and doubt not that your merits and your sufferings will at length meet with their just reward. I can assure you, in perfect truth, that I have been so occupied since this business commenced, that this is the first long letter I have been able to find time to write.

I am,

Very truly yours,

S— M—.

LETTER C.

From the Rev. Mr. Allport to Sylvaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR —,

At length I have a letter from Mr. Britton, unfavourable as it respects the recovery of the *R— M—*, but very favourable and containing important communications in other respects. As it will speak best for itself, I will transcribe the whole that relates to you.

“ I have called on P— and M—, and had half an hour's conference with them respecting Mr. —; but could not obtain any specific reply in regard to re-selling the *R— M—*. It appears that they have sold a share of this edition to some other bookseller. From what I learned from them and other publishers, I do not think it advisable to purchase the work on the author's account; for no other booksellers will give more than P. and M. have already paid for it. Nor do I think the author or his friends could sell them equally well with the present parties. They will,

most probably, dispose of this edition, when the author can make his own and perhaps better terms for another edition."

Now here I am puzzled. I thought by your disposing of the copyright, you could not have any control over future editions; but if this be not so, and if you can make any arrangement for a new one, why then *I* should say, trouble no more about this matter. But to Mr. Britton.

"I have sent a copy to Gifford for the *Quarterly Review*, and propitiated him and other *professed* critics in behalf of the *R— M—*. I have succeeded in getting a new and *substantial* friend for —; the famed philanthropist, Francis Webb. Knowing his kind benevolent disposition, I wrote him a letter inclosing the statement, MS. Memoirs, &c. and yesterday he sent me a note to call on him. The result was, he proposed to give his £5 a year for two years, or even more, towards an annuity: Mr. — to come to London, live retired, and study to qualify himself for literary life; also to make himself acquainted with the public world, and ways and wants of literature. Mr. W. says there can be no doubt but we can raise a subscription for two years for this purpose. Now if you approve of this plan, you will of course consult with some of —'s friends and patrons,—see what they are willing to do, and draw up a short statement

of his case for Mr. Webb and some other gentlemen to confirm and act upon here."

Mr. Britton further adds respecting you,

"My time is wholly and incessantly devoted to literature, and I am generally occupied from nine in the morning till eleven or twelve at night. I cannot therefore afford much time for irrelevant pursuits, or to initiate — ; but still I will regularly give a stated hour per week, and will also promote his views and introduce him to the trade."

Mr. Britton requested me to write my thoughts to Mr. Webb on the subject. Seeing the importance of the proposal, and the vast utility that must result from it in furnishing you with every thing you want, raising up and securing to you suitable, and substantial, and efficient aid in every possible way, and conceiving also that you will view the proposal in the same light, I could not but write somewhat confidently on the subject. After a little necessary preamble, I thus expressed myself to him. "This hitherto unfortunate and neglected author cannot subsist by any other means than what may accrue to him from the produce of his literary attainments and poetic genius; and both need that friendly aid and fostering care which you recommend, and that experienced

direction and acquaintance with the world which he would gain among men of talent and knowledge, and those his friends also. Therefore, as a person anxiously desirous for his welfare, since Providence has wonderfully favoured my poor endeavours to save him from the horrors of despair, and rescue him from wretchedness and want, I cannot but feel deeply interested in your judicious and important proposal. I shall lose no time in communicating it to him, and to his friends here. I shall earnestly press a compliance on his part, and be ready to do my utmost in procuring what subscriptions I can to aid a design likely to be of the most efficient service to him. I beg to offer my sincerest thanks to you for a kindness, and for such friendly interest towards a sufferer of no common class, and a highly deserving character, to whom every act of kindness through me I consider a personal obligation, &c. &c."

Now, my dear sir, you see what is likely to arise out of this, and what is thought of this particular circumstance. Weigh it well in your own mind ; yet overlook none of the unspeakable advantages which must result from it. What an insight into men and things will it not give you ! what opportunities will it afford for collecting information and books, and maturing your pieces

in hand and getting the best advice and correction of them. In the mean time, you can visit home occasionally; and at last return there, like your first literary friend, "a laden bee," to feast on what you have collected, to publish with confidence, and enjoy yourself, your home, and your labours, or turn to other matters. In such a case, the money I have in hand might either be applied to Mrs. —, if she should not accompany you, or put to interest as a stock to begin with on your return,—or in such other way as you might deem best. But I add no more at present. Writing for the books, I thought I might as well order you Bowles's with the others, so that you need not trouble about it. I hope I shall hear something to your advantage from Mr. Bowles next Wednesday. I have desired Mr. Britton to promote the sale of the Tragedy in town, and also to see to the advertisements. And begging God to guide you in your art, and prosper you in your deeds,

I remain, much yours,

JOSIAH ALLPORT.

LETTER CL.

No 2, Buckingham Place, Fitzroy Square.

DEAR FRANK,

ONCE more in the metropolis. And why there again? I hear you ask. Since I wrote you last, in one of the letters which I received from my invaluable friend Mr. Allport, he says "Mr. Britton complains so much of the want of time, that his last letter to me seems like a complete relinquishment of any further exertions on your account. I immediately wrote him again saying, that no one else could manage the business on which your future welfare seemed now to hang, and that to abandon your cause amid such prospects as he had opened, would be ruin indeed." In his next letter my friend says, "I do most certainly think it would be advisable for you to visit town. There only appears to want some agent there, to accomplish the plan Mr. Britton named; and if you were to go up, he certainly, at least, would direct you what to do, introduce you to Mr. Webb, and the business might be settled. At all events you would

now find a great many friends, and they would introduce you to others: and were you to come this way, and take letters from two or three here, especially from one gentleman, to Sharon Turner, and put your new Tragedy into his hands, he might do something for you." Influenced by the impressions of such advice, and hearing nothing of my Tragedy's being either advertised or reviewed, I set off, *via* Chippenham, for London. On my arrival at the Vicarage in the former place, I was received with the most cordial and hospitable friendship by the Rev. and worthy clergyman, who had been my preserver and earthly saviour, and also by some of the most respectable families in the town and neighbourhood.

When I reached town, I found my former publishers had given up their whole business into the hands of Messrs. Whittaker, and with it my Tragedy and poems for youthful minds. This accounts in a great measure for the neglect which has been shown to my Tragedy. Scarce an advertisement of it has yet appeared; scarce a copy has been sold, and not one review or magazine has yet noticed it. I have seen Mr. Britton repeatedly, but Mr. Webb is at some distant watering-place; so there is no hope after all, that I can find, that this plan of his will ever

be brought to any thing. I have waited on the Bishop of St. David's respecting the new Literary Institution, the arrangement of which I understood was placed in his hands: but it seems a Mr. Yates is at the head of the business. His Lordship received me with marked attention, kindness, and affability. He told me to send a copy of each of my works to the board of the new institution, and that then there would be no doubt of my being made a member, if I could procure two or three literary gentlemen to propose and second my wishes. Mr. Britton has promised me this favour at the council, and to get one of his friends to second him. I attended the evening before last, by his invitation and in his company, a grand dinner at the Albany Tavern in the city, it being the anniversary of the Wiltshire Society; the Duke of Somerset in the chair. This was the first dinner of the kind to which I had ever sat down; and the splendour and magnitude of the room, the multitude of the guests, and the magnificence of the banquet had to me a very imposing effect.

I am so far fortunate in coming to town, as to be engaged by the Messrs. Whittaker, for a very fair sum, to compile a new selection of poetry from the best modern authors: and they have

engaged also to publish my new Epic, as soon as it is finished, on the terms of my sharing with them the clear profits. Surely I may now say with Agag, the bitterness of death is past. Surely all to come will now be comfort, if not happiness. I am going to hasten into the country, taking Chippenham, by desire, in my route ; and sit down in sweet retirement to my studies, blest with such peace as none can tell, save those who have weathered the storms and buffetings of adverse fortune. Content is again mine, and that is the *To-Kalon*, the *summum bonum* on earth ; for

“ Pauper enim non est, cui rerum suppetit usus :”

while the reflection of past miseries gives a double relish to present enjoyment. Thus I think, with Seneca,

“ Quæ fuit durum pati,
Meminisse dulce est.”

Yours very truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CII.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

NOTWITHSTANDING the agreement which I made with the W——'s when in town, and their promise most certainly to publish my second Epic as soon as I should complete the work, their subsequent correspondence left its appearance still doubtful, and a tedious and painful period was suffered to elapse before I was apprised that their High Mightinesses would "publish it on the terms originally agreed on."

Close study and application have enabled me to complete the remaining part of this my second Epic, thus making another arduous attempt to reach the pinnacle of poetic glory. How I have succeeded must be left for others to decide. My tale has little or no foundation in history; yet why should it be the less heroic on that account. The "tale of Troy divine," if many are to be believed, is equally devoid of the evidence of truth; unless, what some author has asserted be correct,—namely, that the almost exterminating

war which the other tribes of Israel carried on against that of Benjamin, was the story on which Homer grounded his inimitable epic of the *Iliad*. It was my aim to obtain a tale highly romantic, full of incident and vicissitude, to suit the general taste of the present age more than that of the strictly classical critic; and a story, the interest of which could not in the least be abated by foreknowledge in my readers of any of its events. I applied solely to my own imagination for its characters and incidents, clothing them in the garb of antiquity, as far as my researches into past ages would enable me, without destroying that poetic charm which it was indispensably necessary to throw around them; while the machinery which I have adopted, though certainly not original, is wrought into such a new shape as will, I should hope, obtain for me at least the credit of ingenioueness.

What the result of these midnight labours will be, Heaven only knows: I must leave it to fate. The lofty steep which I have attempted to climb, has been both hazardous and arduous to achieve; but the Muses have scattered flowers in my path, and their smiles have cheered me on my way: and although the unfeeling world should now wholly neglect me, could I but know that in

future times one child of genius and of song would peruse with pleasure the effusions of my pen, and heave a sigh over them for my hard destiny, I should feel more than repaid for every privation, every difficulty, and every toil.

I have been introduced, by letters from ——— Gaby, Esq. of Chippenham, to Mr. Peel, who is lately come to reside in this part of the country. He is a man of great power and extensive influence. His reception was courtly and polite.

I find by Mr. Allport, to whom Mr. Gaby anxiously posted on his receiving an answer respecting me, that Mr. Peel had for some time delayed writing to my Chippenham friend in the expectation of seeing his father at L—— Castle, and learning from him what could be done respecting my being made a member of the new Literary Society. He tells him, too, that he has given me leave to walk in the plantations and pleasure grounds, and free access to the castle library. Mr. Allport, it seems, has also taken the liberty to make him acquainted with the tale of my past disappointments and misfortunes, and he has offered to take several copies of my new poem.

With regard to the derivation of the term *Under the Rose*, which you sent me in your last, permit me to state that I think it is not quite

correct. You there consider that flower as a symbol of Harpocrates, the God of Silence. This deity was worshipped by the Romans, and in the time of Pliny, rings and seals, with the representation of the finger on the mouth, began to be worn to his honour. He was unknown to the Greeks before the time of Alexander; and we trace him as an Egyptian god, represented by those people with the finger on the mouth, (as among the Romans) with the *cornucopia*, *lotus*, &c. When the Greeks borrowed him, they changed his name to Sigaleon, and we find the poppy among his attributes; but in no single instance is the rose represented as being sacred to him.

The Greeks describe him with an Egyptian mitre, as an acknowledgment of his being a foreign deity; and what is very singular, the Egyptians represent him with the head shorn, and a lock of hair on one side, (Mongez *Rec. d'Ant.*) which gives him a pundit-like appearance, and leads us to infer that the Egyptians borrowed him from the oriental mythology. The rose is a flower highly esteemed among the Persians, and is considered as the beloved of the nightingale. Saadi, in his *Gool-istawn*, or *Bed of Roses*, frequently alludes to the allegorical

lines of this flower and the bird of song; and a fable on the same subject is introduced by Sir W. Jones in his *Persian Grammar*. Among the Orientals, the rose is supposed to be intrusted with the secrets of the nightingale; but neither in the Egyptian, Grecian, nor Roman attributes is this flower peculiar to Harpocrates. It was, however, an emblem of silence among the Romans, although its meaning is not clear. Hafez, the Persian Anacreon, in many of his Odes alludes to his mistress under the term *Gool*, or rose; nor do any of his wild ecstatic dreams of bliss and voluptuousness appear to be complete, unless he calls for roses to be scattered round. The Romans were also passionately fond of this flower, and as a term of endearment, used it to their mistresses. It was a luxurious requisite to float in winter on their Falerian draughts: and as the same fondness existed among the Romans as among the Persians for this delightful flower, it is possible that the former adopted the oriental fable of the nightingale's sweetly and plaintively unbosoming its sorrows to the modest and blushing rose; and thus we find it as an emblem of secrecy, although not used as sacred to the God of Silence.

But the derivation of the term *Under the Rose*, appears to be more immediately connected with

the monkish custom, and is handed down as a relic of the Catholic religion. The confessionals were small boxes, in which the penitents were seated while they revealed their sins to the monk, who being in an adjoining room, held his ear to a grating at the side. These boxes were ornamented with small roses over the entrance; and hence, whatever was revealed within these confessionals, was literally *sub rosa*. The Rose of Jericho was considered miraculous, as it flourished about Christmas; and it may have been applied to the carved work of a confessional box, as well for decorative as for sacred purposes.

I remain,

Yours truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CIII.

L—— Cottage.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

I HAVE been waiting week after week,—nay, month after month in the hope of announcing to you the publication and reception of my new Epic. O, these booksellers! these mercenary booksellers! will they ever bring the poem out?

In a former letter, I acquainted you with my engagement to prepare a new Selection of Poetry. Having devoted considerable labour to make it an acceptable volume, I was little prepared for the mortification to which the publishers have unfeelingly exposed me. When it came to be printed, it was found not to contain sufficient matter for the size intended. Without giving themselves the trouble to acquaint me with this, they put it in the hands of some one in London to incorporate what stuff he pleased, and deducted nearly fifteen pounds from the sum they originally agreed to pay me for the work! A rare sample of the delicacy and liberality of these encouragers of literary talent and genius!

Last week I received intelligence that a large parcel had arrived for me at the neighbouring town of W——. “Well,” I joyfully exclaimed, “the copies of my new poem are come at last, and the work is at length published to the world!” Full of expectation and pleasure, which none but an author can experience, I flew to W——, for I could not have the patience to wait the parcel’s slow arrival at the cottage. With what joy did I sever the cords that bound it, eager beyond expression to gratify my sight with the London-printed copies of my new Epic. But O judge, if it be possible, of my surprise and disappointment on finding the parcel to contain nothing but the unexpected copies of my poor unfortunate Tragedy! Forty only had been sold; while the expenses of a few advertisements, carriage to London, booksellers’ profits, &c. had swallowed up all the money received for them, except five shillings which was kindly enclosed to defray a heavy bill for printing and paper!

To what disastrous fortune am I not doomed! How much is it to be regretted that my ill-fated Tragedy should chance to issue from the press at the very time when Messrs. P. and M. who would have done all in their power for it, were obliged to dispose of their business; that it should be

turned over to the W——'s who had no interest in the work sufficient to urge them in the least to promote its sale! Alas! they advertised it but a few times in two or three newspapers, never attempted to get it noticed in a single periodical or review, and gave themselves no concern about its fate or its disappointed author!

I have detained my letter a whole month, and still my new poem lingers in the press.

Hearing a few days ago that the philanthropic Webb, as he is somewhat fantastically called, whose proposals to Mr. Britton respecting me I remember to have told you of a great while ago, was at Christchurch, I rashly resolved to pay him a visit, intending to solicit his interest in promoting among his numerous friends and connexions the sale of my forthcoming poem, but without the remotest intention of naming his gone-by plan of my residence in London. I took care to put certain letters in my pocket to serve as credentials and an introduction, that he might not suspect me for an impostor, and sat off on foot for Hampshire.

On my arrival at Christchurch, I found that a company of comedians was there; and that he

nightly filled, to their great emolument, the gallery, pit, and boxes with all the rabble of the town, to the disgust of all the respectable families in the neighbourhood. I found, too, that it was his glory to be followed through the streets by a shouting gang of ragged boys and girls; that he would seize the loaves in the baskets of the baker-boys as they passed, and roll them in the canal, and then exultingly pay more than their actual price for them.

He one day saw a chimney-sweeper go by, with a bag of soot at his back. "I should like to see how he would look when well cleaned," said this discriminating dispenser of charity. "Call sooty in, and let the cook and scullion scour and scrub him well, and take care they don't spare soap. Get a handsome suit of new clothes, and when he is dressed, let him be brought to me into the parlour. After going through the process of a good scouring, the knight of the chimney was ushered with all due ceremony into the parlour, and his warm-hearted patron was highly delighted with his new *protégé*, and he instantly inquired if he was fond of tarts. "O yes," said sweepy, "I should terribly like to have my belly chuck o' them there nice things." The poor delighted fellow was instantly taken to

a pastry cook's, and crammed with as many sweets and delicacies as he could well swallow. From thence, Webb squired him to a silversmith's, gave him a handsome watch, and then sent him adrift.

On one occasion he went into a shop, and purchased a fiddle and music-book. Then getting two boys, between whom he shared a certain portion of his bounty, he made one carry before him the violin, and the other the music. The boy fell to scratching the now tormented strings, till they squeaked sounds horribly discordant. Marching as solemnly as a strolling actor in Alexander, on his first entrance on the stage of a barn, to the river side, the man of philanthropy seized the instrument and book, and flung them both into the water. He then ordered the boys to plunge in after them, which they stoutly refused; and, running off, left him to contemplate the movements of the fiddle sailing leisurely down the stream.

Another time, he met two country bumpkins fresh from the plough-tail, whom he also took to a pastry cook's to see how many jellies and cheese-cakes they could possibly devour. When they had cleared the shop and gormandized almost to suffocation, he generously dismissed them with

a pound note each, as much delighted with the entertainment they had given him as the fellows could possibly be with the novel and highly relished treat which they had just received. These were some of the thousand absurd tricks of the same ridiculous kind, which I was informed he is continually committing.

I thought this very strange; but still Mr. Britton's letter made me desirous to see him. I had to wait two days for that pleasure, as he had gone to sea at an early hour the day after my arrival. At length I got access to him through the crowd that beset his residence on every side, waiting to hail with obstreperous shouts the forthcoming of this sultan of philanthropy.

I had pictured in my imagination a world of goodness beaming forth with all the rays of intelligence and godlike benevolence, in the countenance of this far-famed man of wealth and generosity. I had fancied he must be the bright personification of one of those apostolic figures, in which the matchless pencil of the Italian artist has centred all the sublimity, intellect, and affectionate goodwill to mankind, which the human face is capable of expressing; combined with fascinating manners, an open frankness that charms, and a demeanour that at once commands

our respect and attachment. But how great was my surprise, to find him possessed of a cast of countenance without a single trait of nobleness about it, a vulgar air, and manners anything but prepossessing. And when he absolutely refused to read my letters, or hear anything I had to say on the subject of my poem, I stood stupified with astonishment, and mentally exclaimed, "Can this indeed be the person Mr. Britton eulogised so warmly in his letters to my friend?" I soon perceived I had made a false estimate of his character, and quitted him with a disgust I did not attempt to conceal.

Thus I undertook a journey of more than sixty miles, to see a man who had held forth to me prospects of the most flattering kind, when at a distance and unknown to him; but who when I visited him with unquestionable testimonials,—though he was then squandering hundreds on the worthless that were constantly imposing on his lavish folly, and in ways the most silly and ridiculous,—refused to do me the slightest service, or advance the sale of my work.

I remain,
Your constant friend,
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CIV.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

PARDON my not having written to you for so long a period. I have had nothing but complaints to utter, and those I am more weary of making than my friends can possibly be of listening to them. I am as one worn down with sorrows and misfortune.

My second epic has been now published some months. You say in your last, that you have "read it with intense interest and delight, and that in your opinion it surpasses in sweetness of language, vividness of poetic imagination, and originality, my first production." It may be,—I hope it is so. I have many letters from other friends, which justify and confirm your good opinion of the work. But alas! I labour in the poetic vineyard to no purpose. I toil in vain, while other and more fortunate bards reap an advantageous harvest in the fields of immortal poetry and fame. Not one of the leading reviews has yet noticed in the least this poem. It is in

vain any longer to contend with my fate. I must submit, however reluctant, to my doom of oblivion, anguish, and wretchedness, till death shall kindly put a period at last to my sufferings ! I lie on my sleepless pillow night after night, reflecting on my hard lot, till I seem almost choked with the agony of intense feeling.

In addition to my other afflictions, my most worthy and valued friend, Mrs. Fordyce, departed this life about the time my last poem was announced. A memoir of that excellent lady is shortly to be published, at the end of which I am expected to write a few elegiac lines, which I shall do with recollections of the sincerest gratitude, and mingled feelings of pain and pleasure.

I send you a few lines, written on the recent death of a beloved female relative. She is gone and at rest ; but I am left amid a wild and boisterous sea, driven by the tempest of my destiny towards the wreck-devoted shores of despair, while Hope's far-distant beacon-light gleams not across the dark billows of calamity, that roll in mountains o'er my sinking bark !

Still I continue,

Yours in truth,

SYLVATICUS.

ELEGY.

I saw her, as in agony she lay
Upon her death-couch.—Gracious heaven ! long years
Had flown away since last in happy days,
That face of paleness and of sorrow I
Beheld, with beauty crowned. Ah me, how changed !
The marble brow was there,—but O, how wan !
And on it stood the cold and clammy drops
That suffering Nature weeps at every pore,
When soul and body, those companions dear,
Take their eternal parting. Still there strayed
Upon that brow a raven-shining lock,
Half veiling her sweet eye, like a dark cloud
Upon the sunny west, when the evening ray
Struggles to fling its farewell glory forth.
And O, how changed that cheek; o'er which the rose,
The laughing rose of high intelligence,
Spread its vermillion bloom, and sweetly won
The homage of the heart. The ghastly hue
And dimness of a long dark night usurps
That shrine of loveliness, through which the soul
Shone forth in all its immortality
Of energy and thought, as sunbeams dart
Through the deep crimson-blushing clouds of morn.
Her lips, that once were of the rosebud's die
That peeps the green moss through, are paler now
Than the last snowdrop flower. What wreck is here !
O, there is nothing left of beauty's pomp,
Save the full darkness of her star-like eye,
That twinkles feebly o'er the evening cloud

Ere its eternal sitting ! O, to me
This change is sudden, sad, and terrible !
As if the western hurricane had passed
Athwart an island paradise, and turned
To desolate ruin all its blooming bowers !
O, as I on thy faded form do gaze,
The thoughts of other days rush o'er my soul :
Thy death-dimmed countenance on me reflects,
Like the pale moon, the shadows of past joys ;
When in our early days we walked the groves,
The summer groves, and heard the mountain lark
Pour her sun-lighted music to the morn ;
Or listened in the wood-bower's primrose shade,
To notes of thrush or purple-bosomed dove,
When on the ocean marge, at set of sun,
We wandered hand in hand : while from the waves
Mid their dim caverns came ærial strains
Upon the sea-breeze wild, that seemed the song
Of mermaids on some distant surge-laved rock,
Blessing the beauteous peacefulness that reigned
O'er earth, and sea, and sky.

Then first I dared,
With feeble hand, my new-strung harp to wake ;
While on my simple lay thou kindly smilest,
Like star-attended Dian when she flings
Aside her silvery veil and to the song,
The first soft song of the young nightingale,
Her own loved minstrel of the forest, lists.
Ah ! in those hours what dreams of happiness
Our warm imaginations pictured forth,
And fondly thought that Time to them would give

Reality and substance,—fondly thought
 The world which lay before us dressed in flowers
 And sunlight smiles, was one vast paradise
 Of joy and splendour. Fate soon parted us.
 And soon I found the world a howling waste,
 A desert, beat with storms, whose horrid shades
 Haunted a thousand cruel beasts of prey :
 Where all the flowers that happiness put forth,
 Withered beneath chill Sorrow's baneful drops ;
 And Pleasure's beam, with momentary glance,
 Shone mid the clouds of Care, as sunlight gleams
 Across the darkened firmament, and dies
 Amid the thunder-tempest. Years have past,
 And borne their load of misery along :
 And now we meet again, to part—for ever !
 And this is earth ! - - -
 O, never, never till this gloomy hour,
 Did I hang weeping o'er a dying friend !
 In all the agonies I have endured,
 That anguish still was spared me.

“ Cease those tears,”

Faintly she whispered ; “ Do not mourn for me :
 I'm past all tears, and dry is Sorrow's fount.
 I have lost sight of life's dull cheerless shades,
 Where all at best is bitterness and change.
 The glorious scenes of immortality
 Are dawning brighter on me every hour.
 There shines a splendour inexpressible,
 To which the stars and sunbeams shadows are !
 It is a light, that from the portal streams
 Of heaven and blessedness ! No mortal tongue

Can paint what I behold around the gates
Of New Jerusalem ! What shapes of pomp
And an unworldly glory wait me there !
I see them brightest when these eyes are closed,
And every earthly object quite shut out.
O, haste to follow me ! The pangs of death
Will soon be o'er. Adieu ! a last adieu !
Till we shall meet where parting is no more !"

And she is gone ! The last deep sigh that spoke
Her farewell to the world, was like the voice
Of moonlight winds amid the cypress boughs,
Softly and sweetly mournful. And there flashed
A light from her dark eye, the last it shed,
A setting brightness, as if that dim veil
Which curtained in mortality, the hand
Of death had flung aside, and shown her heaven.
In all its glory ; while her spirit stood
One moment on that narrow verge which parts
Time from Eternity !

O, lift no more
The white shroud, strewed with rosemary and flowers,
That hides what has been beautifully good.
Sink, sink it must in cold and dark decay,
And perish from the earth that gave it birth,
Like all her short-lived splendours and vain pomp
That shine, and quickly fade in endless night !

LETTER CV.

L—— Cottage.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE the pleasure to inform you, that the Editor of the *Literary Chronicle*, whom I have never seen, never communicated with, and who must have been actuated solely by motives of justice and kindness to the injured and neglected, has given a highly favourable review of my last epic poem, for which he has my warmest thanks, my everlasting gratitude. This weekly review, I am unquestionably informed, is not under the undue influence of any of the booksellers, and is at the same time conducted by a gentleman of candour, integrity, feeling, and honour.

As I know that it will give you much pleasure to learn the opinion which several London editors, following the example of the *Literary Chronicle*, have declared of my poem, I shall copy a few portions of their criticism from such of the reviews of the day, as are at present within my reach.

"We confess that this author in his last poem, has most agreeably deceived us. The action of the poem is placed in the dark ages of Saxon paganism, or rather in the very twilight of Christianity, dawning on the rude and warlike tribes of the northern invaders of Britain; by which means, he has judiciously availed himself of two opposite and well-contrasted systems of religion on which to found his splendid machinery. The Scandinavian mythology, in which our author delights to revel, is brought forward in a new and interesting shape; and over the whole is thrown such a classical enchantment, as imparts to it all the charm of novelty. Contrary to the generality of other epic poems, love, unsuccessful love, finds a chief place in *R*——. It may be said to be the principal spring of action, and is wrought up to so full a climax of anguish and fatal suffering in the interesting heroine of the tale, as cannot fail of affording an unqualified source of mournfully pleasing gratification to our fair countrywomen. We pretend not to examine this poem by the rules of the ancient epic, nor to speak critically of the beauties or defects of certain passages. We have seen enough to convince us that it has all the witching charms of a northern romance, softened and adorned with the splendid colourings of the classic muse."—*La Belle Assemblée*, No. 177.

"The poem forms a well-told narrative, interspersed with some charming episodes, and displaying an origin-

ality of thought, a beauty of versification, and a poetic grandeur which are very rarely to be met with, even in poems of much less magnitude, but which are here sustained through twelve cantos. The interest of the poem never flags for a moment, and although it abounds in the most powerful descriptions, and scenes of the deepest pathos, yet there are no sudden transitions, no forced similes, or unnatural images, the author holding the even tenor of his way the whole poem throughout."—*Literary Chronicle*, No. 215.

"This author has boldly retraced the steps of declining poesy, and attempted to arrest the progress of popular disfavour. In the execution of such a design, he must inevitably meet with obstacles arduous to be surmounted; he must expect silence where he had looked for applause, and inattention where he had hoped to inspire pleasure. A reversion of public favour from the light and trivial poetry of the day,—that school of composition which clothes morbidity of imagination, or the vice of passion, in the liveliest attire,—time alone can effect. But, if ever again the intrinsic purity, delicate softness, and harmonious numbers of true epic poesy shall be found to inspire admiration and disseminate virtuous sentiment, we cannot hesitate to declare our conviction that the author must stand high among the writers of his class. The production it is our business to consider, is recommended by originality of conception and delicacy of thought, strictly chaste in his compe-

sition, and harmonious in its members. The peculiar grace of its similes, the connexion and uniformity of its story, the ingenuity of its incidents, render it, as a poem, at least one of the most faultless, if not the most amusing books that have for some time appeared. On the whole, we must award to him the acknowledgment of a truly poetic genius. It has hitherto been directed to a species of composition inconsonant with the passing taste of the day; but, we repeat, when our ancient estimation of true beauty of poesy, harmony, and chaste imagery shall return, R—— will claim that general attention and approval which are due to its peculiar merits."—*Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, No. 578.

"There are always some men in the literary world, whose writings attract extraordinary attention; but who through adventitious aids, becoming what is termed the leading popular authors of the day, reap a golden harvest of success; while it as certainly happens, that many of their equally talented fellow-labourers in the field of literature, unpossessed of such adventitious aids, are doomed through the chilling influence of neglect to 'waste their sweetness on the desert air,' and pine in indigent obscurity. Every person is aware, that in this age of universal reading, there is an immense profusion of poesy that springs up around us, like some vast wilderness, in which flourish a boundless exuberance of foliage, a superabundance of the rankest weeds, and

many poisonous plants, that proudly lowering to the skies in beautiful luxuriance, taint, like the fabled Upas-tree, the surrounding atmosphere, and beneath whose baneful shadow, virtue, morality, and religion wither and die, while the demon of infidelity sits at their feet grinning to behold the moral desolation 'around him !

Yet amidst this enchanted forest of genius, are to be found embowered spots covered with the loveliest verdure, and decked with roses that bloom unfadingly, where the wearied wanderer, in search of intellectual pleasure, may repose on beds of the richest flowers, drink of the true Castalian streams that meander by, and breathe the delicious air of paradise. These remarks may be treated as common-place by the superficial reader ; but they have been elicited from us by comparing the opposite fate of certain great poets of the present day. Who, for instance, has not heard of the princely sums obtained for their works by Byron, Scott, and Moore ? and whose library do they not grace ? And who *has* heard of the no less beautiful poetry of —, contained in his two epic poems ? Yet we, who have seen them, challenge the most fastidious critic to a comparison of their merits and defects, with the works of the before-named more popular rivals. We have lately risen from the perusal of his last epic, which fully confirms us in this opinion ; for it is undeniably a work replete with the choicest beauties. It is founded on an Anglo-Saxon tale of the seventh century,

with all the true mannerism and practices of those rude and barbarous ages, wrought into the classical form of a regular epic,—an undertaking that we know of no other poet in the present day who would venture to attempt,—heightened by a machinery perfectly consonant to that dark period of half Paganism and half Christianity. Indeed, the work appears to us like a noble but modern structure tastefully decorated with the florid ornaments of Gothic architecture, which, though it may want the sublime and simple grandeur of the ancients, yet it is built with such perfect regularity as at once pleases and astonishes; while its elaborate adornments are so arranged as not to destroy the effect, or possibly offend the eye of the judicious critic. We do not pretend to say that it has not faults, but they are more than compensated by its many splendid passages; and we sincerely regret that the multifarious contents of our paper prevent us from giving them insertion, as we should thereby gratify our feelings of admiration for so excellent a poem, and respect for its neglected, though highly-gifted author,—an author whom we are credibly informed is self-educated, and who had he received one hundredth part of that encouragement that has been so lavishly bestowed on Scott and Byron, would have ere now surprised the world with the vividness of his imagination.”—*Bell's Life in London.*

“The action is deeply wrought, anxiously interesting,

full of excitement, and transformation, and vicissitudes. The story of *R*—— altogether is, in fact, rather romantic than epic; possessing more of communion with the beautiful poetic romances of Scott and of Byron, than with the legitimate and more measured creations of the Epics of other days.

As far as concerns the fable of the *R*—— *M*——, there is nothing wanting to the propriety and eventful magnificence of the subject which should be adopted for an heroic poem; and assuredly no subject ever presented more busy and changing circumstances for the epic action. The author has not sunk under the variety and magnitude of the theme. The reader will discover few occasions where the Poet has failed to clothe his execution in dignity and strength, and very many in which he has availed himself to the utmost of the splendid materials before him. The disinterested and affecting friendship of Jonathan towards David; the fine character and melancholy fate of that prince; and the noble conduct of David, when his persecutor Saul falls into his power; the remorse and horrors which agonized the last days of that wretched monarch; and the lamentations of David over the fall of his sovereign and his friend, may all be numbered among the circumstances which the Poet has happily moulded for his purpose.

We have devoted an unusual share of notice to the volumes before us; for we entertain a highly favourable

opinion of the powers of this author's mind, and would willingly afford him whatever benefit may be derived from our labours. If our laudatory observations have the effect of procuring the encouragement of our readers for a man of TRUE GENIUS and amiable character ; if our strictures can in any degree promote the improvement of his future compositions,—we shall be satisfied that our time and attention have not been expended in vain.”—*New Edinburgh Review*, No. 9.

“ Be it our object, therefore, strongly to recommend the perusal of this author's poem on its own substantial merits ; to entreat our readers to forego the prejudices they may have imbibed and nourished against this higher species of intellectual exertion, (prejudices most unworthy the Augustine æra of literature ; and to assure them that there is a redeeming talent in this poem, that will amply reward their time and attention.

The poem is founded on fictitious events supposed to have occurred during the earlier part of the Saxon Heptarchy, a period highly favourable for poetical illustration ; and is treated by this author with much of the science of the antiquary, and the imaginative faculty of the poet. The Scandinavian mythology has supplied him with much rich material, and he has used it with judgment and effect.”—*Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 93. part 2.

“ This looks well,” you will say, “ and though long delayed, your prospects brighten rapidly at last.” Quite otherwise, my friend ; they darken apace, and I at present see nothing but a black and dismal close ; a storm that soon must burst on my devoted head.—But let it pass.—Hereafter you may know more. That you may never feel the agonies I now endure, will ever be the prayer of

Your sincere friend,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CVI.

From the Rev. Mr. Allport to Sybaticus.

Chippenham Vicarage.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE not time to give vent to the feelings which oppressed me, on the receipt of your soul-harrowing letter of last evening. I have been to-day in Bath, to which place I was called to see a dying friend; and I the more readily went at a time when, from bodily indisposition, I was far from being fit for the journey, in the eager hope of being able to do something for you, and afford some relief to your heart-rending situation; but through the miserable rainy state of the weather, and other hindrances, I have been wholly disappointed. I have the gratification, however, of enclosing you a — note of the Chippenham Bank, which I hope you will receive safe. I only wish I could send you fifty such. If I had the means, you should labour no longer under such accumulated and overwhelming distress.

Having expressed my sentiments on other points in my last, which must have crossed yours, I need not add anything more at present. God Almighty preserve, succour, and deliver you ! As soon as a paragraph appears in the *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, and my friend the Editor has given a formal announcement of his intention to insert a series of notices, impartially written, of you and your works, you shall have a paper sent to you.

I remain, in haste,
With the most sincere sympathy,
Yours faithfully,
JOSIAH ALLPORT.

LETTER CVII.

To the Rev. J. Allport.

L—— Cottage.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHAT shall I say ? How shall I begin to utter my poor thanks for such unlooked for exertions in my favour, and so often repeated ? All language is useless ; for I can say nothing that will any way paint in its celestial colours your unutterable kindness,—nothing that can fully express my gratitude for your truly Samaritan compassion to the distressed and wretched. Be silent, then, my heart ; for silence here may be eloquent and expressive.

Before I informed you of my hopeless misery, (for I could not quit this place and not acquaint you with it, though I wrote without the most distant expectation of your being able to effect anything more on my behalf), I had spoken to a broker in a neighbouring town to come to the cottage, and take the little all that I possessed in the world. The evening prior to his intended arrival came down upon me in double darkness

and anguish, and I sat absorbed in the deepest melancholy, repining at my bitter fate. Already I saw my dear-loved habitation stripped of every thing, and the walls appeared in naked desolation before me. Already I saw those things to which I had so long been used and attached, (for there is scarcely one I possess to which some little tale of simple interest does not extend), in the hands of strangers and accounted as nothing, or trifles not worth a thought. I saw my books, so valued and beloved, torn from me; my British relics of antiquity cast away in scorn; and myself driven forth, with my wife and child, to wander heart-broken through an unfeeling world, to seek a home among strangers I knew not where!

And O, how much was the anguish of that gloomy hour increased by the thoughts of what my aged and widowed mother would feel at our sad parting! For with her weight of years, it was impossible she could go with us and quit the village where she had always resided, to accompany a houseless wanderer. To reflect on the tears that she would shed, when compelled to bid her a long and perhaps an eternal farewell; to leave her desolate and forlorn, without one dear relative nigh to soothe her last sad days, and render those kind attentions so necessary to her comfort: when my little boy,—the child in whom

her life seems bound up,—was to imprint his last kiss on her grief-worn and faded cheek, when her dim eyes, made still dimmer by gushing floods of sorrow, would watch our evanescent forms as we departed from her till she could behold us no more, and then return heart-broken to her cheerless and lonely habitation :—O, to think of this, was indeed the bitterness of grief, and swallowed up all thoughts of my own future destiny.

In that dark hour of inexpressible anguish, came most unexpectedly your kind consoling letter, with its valued contents. It was a gleam of brightness from Heaven, shot through the unpitying tempest which had laid me prostrate ! It spoke of comfort, hope, and future bliss ! O, that I could at that moment of almost delirious joy have knelt at your feet, bathed your hand with my scalding tears, and blessed you a thousand and a thousand times for such undreamt-of salvation from unutterable wretchedness : for my home, my books, my dear, dear parent, all, all were spared me a little longer, and I felt blest indeed !

I send you the following lines, expressive of my feelings on the evening I received your letter,
and remain, my dear sir,

Your ever grateful

SYLVATICUS.

AN ADIEU TO HOME.

FAREWELL, dear home ! a sad, a last farewell !
O, had we sundered in a brighter hour,
Thou wouldst have claimed a tear of fond regret :
But now to quit thee ! from thy lowly roof
To wander through the inhospitable world
I know not where, and never see thee more,—
Like the poor sea-boy, tossed without or helm
Or compass on the storm-devoted surge
Of some wild unknown sea,—O, 'tis indeed
A parting deep of anguish !

Dear-loved home !
Thou through the midnight gloom and tempest-hour
When, shaken by the gusts the reeling woods,
That round thee spread their winter-ravaged arms
To shelter and protect, outroared the voice
Of the deep thunder-swell, didst from the rage
Of battling elements enshield my head,
And to my storm-rocked slumbers kindly give
Security and comfort : when the winds,
Those vagrant minstrels of the evening, sung
Round thy closed doors their melancholy song,
And their shrill whistle at the casement came
Full of sad melody, far from the world
And all its heartless splendours, O, how sweet
It was beside thy flame-lit hearth to hold
Communion with the maids of Helicon !
O, they have from Parnassian woods, and hills,
And classic founts of inspiration come
To visit me, gliding like radiant clouds

That float in sunset pomp along the west
Around my seat ; till like Philemon's cot
Thy lowly roof and clay-built walls all seemed
To pillars of opal, gold, and gems transformed.
Sheaves of sweet-smelling blossoms showered they there,
And hung thy gorgeous beams with rich-hued wreaths ;
Castalian roses, which on the green brim
Of Inspiration's stream bloomed in the eye
Of music-loving Phœbus ; violets sweet
That lurk amid the Paphian bowers of love,
And Venus gathers when the dewa impearl
Their purple leaves, to scatter o'er her couch ;
The bright blood-tinged Adonis, and that flower
Of deepest gold which o'er the Muses' fount
Leans doating on its image in the wave ;
Myrtles begemmed with coral buds and bloom
Of snowy tint, and greener hues than those
With which Calypso bound the raven locks
Of her captive warrior in her sea-girt isle ;
The blowing jessamine and asphodel,
Which in the grove of Daphne drink the dewa
From laughing-eyed Aurora's balmy urn,
And those empurpled buds Apollo loves,
That from sweet Hyacinthus' life-drops sprung,
With golden fruits delicious, thyme, and myrrh,
Brought from the gardens of the Hesperides ;
These, and a thousand flowers more beautiful
Than e'en Proserpine's virgins from their hands
Affrighted flung in Enna's roseate fields,
When gloomy Pluto to his Stygian realms
Triumphant bore her in his iron grasp,

Flung their pure odours round me, till my cot
Out-smiled Pomona's bower !

O, when far hence

A weary pilgrim of the world I stray,
Be it amid the boundless forest wilds
Of famed Columbia's world, where roam at will
The mighty elk and happy Indian band ;
Or on the flame-peaked Andes, whose proud tops
Lie far above the lofty-floating clouds ;
On Afric's shores, where mid her mango groves
And odour-breathing orange woods Death holds
His hideous carnival, and piteous shrieks
Of Slavery's victims ring from burning huts
That wake the lion's roar : or in those isles
Yclept the blest, the fortunate, that gem
The Atlantic deep, in whose delightful shades
And spicy forests eternal Summer dwells,
Mingling her rich geranium hues and flowers
With Autumn's fruitage, groves that through their leaves
Put forth their crimson, gold, and purple wealth ;
Or be it on the desert's horrid wastes,
That to the brazen skies on every side
Outspread in dismal prospect, unrelieved
By grove or mountain, tree or cooling spring,
Save the false lake that seems to pilgrim eye
Wood, tower, and tree-reflecting wave to hold,
But as the sun-parched traveller onward hies,
Like earthly hopes, in disappointment fades ;
Where the simoon-smote caravan lies stretched,
With all its treasures, mid the sandy surge,
While camel-bell, and horn, and evening song

Are hushed into the silence deep of death ;
 Or mid the eastern city's thronged mart,
 Where half the distant nations of the globe
 Do congregate, and Babel seems restored ;
 Or musing on the lonely green-turf mounds,
 Tombs of brave warrior chiefs, that crown the plains
 Of famed Thermopylæ and sacred Troy ;
 Or ancient council-place,* where still are seen

* " Upon the left hand of the road, are to be seen large circles of hewn stone ; which the Persians affirm to be a great sign that the Caous, making war in Medea, held a council in that place : it being the custom of those people, that every officer that came to the council brought with him a stone, to serve him instead of a chair. These Caous were a sort of giants. What is the most to be admired, after observation of these stones, is this, that they are so big that eight men can hardly move one ; and yet there is no place from whence they can be imagined to have been fetched, but from the next mountains, which are six leagues off."—*Chardin*, p. 371.

" This extract deserves notice on two accounts : 1. the Persian notion of stones being used instead of chairs at a council ; this must have had some origin, and must also have been customary at some time in that country. The sitting upon stones, then, could not have been always totally unknown in Mesopotamia, where Laban resided and Jacob with him ; and what was customary at a council, might be practised at a covenant agreement. 11. The resemblance of these circles of large stones to the druidical monuments of our own country,—Stonehenge, Abury, &c. is striking ; and the finding of structures so similar in regions so distant, demonstrates the extensive spread and influence (I suppose, too, in some degree the identity) of that religion, whose exercise had occasioned their erection. If the reader has looked in druidical history, this inference will appear to him with great force and justice.

Chardin describes what he saw as large circles of stones, which might require eight men to move one stone of them. Precisely such are sundry of the druidical monuments now extant in Great Britain, circles of large stones with, usually, one principal in the midst to serve the purposes of an altar. With this idea in our minds, let us examine the monument of Jacob and Laban, Gen. xxxi. 45. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar, (*METSEBEN*, an elevation,—a rising,—a rounding,—a protuberance ;—say for a central stone, the highest he could find within a competent distance) : and Jacob said to his brethren, gather stones together ; and they took stones and made (*GAL*, or *GALEL*, as the Keri reads still stronger), a

The unhewn, the patriarchal-druid stone,
 The pillar of remembrance, now quite left
 Without or name or record on the earth
 To tell of former deeds ; or when the orb
 Of day retires, I wander through thy streets
 Desolate Thebes, and view thy giant gates,
 Thy mighty temples, statues of the gods,
 And Cyclopæan monuments that seem
 The awful ruins of another world ;
 While the low evening winds with mournful voice
 Sigh through the roofless halls and colonnades
 Of everlasting granite, and awake
 In fancy's ear thy Memnon's magic tones
 That hailed the rising sun's cloud-scattering beam ;
 Or as I stand, in wild amazement lost,
 Beneath the pyramids, and gaze upon
 Antediluvian wonders ;* wheresoe'er
 My pilgrim feet shall wander, still to thee,
 Sweet dear-loved home, my painful thoughts will veer,
 And from my inmost spirit, draw a sigh
 For thy beloved retirement !

ring of stones, i. e. a circle of stones with intervals between them ; and did
 eat thereupon (or at) the circle. And Laban called it IGAR SHADUTA.
 (IGAR, Chaldee, I suppose, for EGAL) the circle of testimony, but Jacob
 called it GAL-OD (qy ? EGAL-OD,) the circle of witness. And Laban said
 this circle—ring—of stones, witness (OD) between me and thee.

Is not the similarity sufficient to justify our regarding this monument as
 closely allied to those of the druids extant among us ?.....As sacrifices
 were usual at covenant agreements, were not sacrifices slain and offered on
 these stones (probably on the centre one) by Jacob and Laban ? and is not
 this implied in the 'eating' to which the historian alludes ?"—*Fragments to*
Calmes's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.

* Vide Gabb on the Pyramids.

Ah, no more

Shall I at the sun-brightened morning list
The swallow twittering his love-laboured song
On thy pine-shadowed roof, nor hear again
The Æthiop-winged blackbird in thy groves
Chanting his farewell hymn to parting day ;
Nor wander in thy neighbouring woods to muse
What time the silver-talking turtle tells
Her tale of love, and every field and bank
With primroses and cowslips bright are starred ;
Within thy ivy portal I no more
Shall sit, while every bloomy shrub and plant,
With which thy little garden I have stored,
Breathe fragrance on the soft wayfaring breeze,
To view the full moon cast her beauteous light
Around thee through those poplar-trees that make
Sweet music with the winds, as from afar
The watch-dog's voice at intervals is heard,
And the sweet nightingale her varied song
Pours in rich harmony, while ocean rolls
Beneath the distant cliffs its ground sea swell
A diapason deep, not loud, but full
And solemn as cathedral organ's, heard
Pealing a funeral hymn through midnight aisles.
And I must leave thee, O, thou dear-loved home !
That home, which the bright visits of the Muse,
And sorrows I've endured beneath its shade,
Have rendered dearer far than all the flowers,
The fields, the woods, and birds that circle it
With simple beauties : yes, sweet home, adieu !
For part we must :—ay, and for ever part !

Tears,—drops wrung from my heart, will thee bedew,
As I for the last time thy threshold press ;
As a last parting glimpse I turn to catch
Of thy low roof and guardian trees that spread
Their waving foliage round thee, and behold
My tender mother weeping in their shade
Whom I must meet no more !

Adieu, adieu !

O, may no ruffian hand demolish thee,
Root up thy trees, and trample down thy flowers,
When I am far away. Mayst thou be spared,
As he the conqueror of the world preserved
The dwelling of the mighty Theban bard,
When the fierce lawless warren roamed in blood
Through the sacked city, wrapped in struggling flames !

LETTER CVIII.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

To ease your friendly anxiety respecting me, and that you may learn what it was that caused me to write to you so despondingly as I did in my last, I think I cannot do so more effectually than by copying a paragraph which has lately appeared in the *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, respecting the situation of your friend.—

“Amidst the gaieties and heedlessness of society; there are hearts that can feel for the distress of the wretched. The mind that is inured to privation, and accustomed to the inflictions of poverty,—that can, without sense of degradation, represent its wants to the world,—finds sympathy, comfort, and relief; while the secret pining, the retiring misery of the truly afflicted object is too often neglected, because it is unknown. The delicate mind, which is ever the concomitant of education and genius, represses the publication of its woes, and hides from the general gaze the heart-breaking which adverse fortune has inflicted. Who could

behold a man of acknowledged genius, one whose life has been irreproachable, whose benefits to the literary world have been signal, sinking under oppressive disappointments which could not have been averted ;—who could behold him without sympathy, or hesitate to afford that aid which may raise him from impending ruin ? None. With sorrow, yet with perfect confidence, we candidly declare the object of our remarks to be ———, the author of two epic poems, which have received unqualified approval.

The peculiar difficulties under which he has laboured, and the heart-rending circumstances of keen distress through which he has prosecuted his labours, come with double claim on the regard of a generous and enlightened public. Chiefly by means of the kind assistance rendered him about three years ago by some individuals of Bath and its neighbourhood, he has striven against misfortune, and combated with penury ; he has looked forward with hope to the reward of his talented labours ; he has cheered an amiable partner of his woes, cherished an aged mother, and protected a child ;—but his privations have been incredible, and he has experienced an extremity of want that cannot admit of description. And even now, though driven by a series of disappointments to the the very acme of misery, (which he would have still withheld from the knowledge of all but one benevolent friend), he is unconscious of this application to the humane and generous. — His hopes of advantage from the publication of his deservedly admired poems,

have hitherto vainly flattered him; his subsequent industry has been without reward; yet has he again borne penury extreme in tacit suffering, till daily sustenance could not be obtained. It is true, that himself and family have subsisted for many weeks on the produce of a small garden; even bread has been once more wanting. We need not proceed in the painful relation: the generous heart requires no further incentive."

This feeling appeal speaks all, and more than you could wish. Nor was it made in vain. It was inserted by the kindness of the worthy Editor, who, through Mr. Allport, became acquainted with me and my misfortunes. He has not been one of the non-performing promisers, like the majority of those it has been my unfortunate lot through life to be connected with. And he shall have my warmest thanks: long as this heart can breathe one prayer to Heaven, it shall not in its orisons forget my benefactor,—he and all those, who, though few in number, have been my warmest supporters, and came forward, with a zealous benevolence to which no words can do justice, to rescue me from the most hopeless of situations.

" Yes, from the table of my memory.
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
Saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;

α θ.

And THEIR BENEVOLENCE alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixt with baser matter."

I have pleasure in being able to add, that it is in the contemplation of some of my friends at Bath, (and Mr. Allport tells me I have several powerful ones there), to get my Tragedy brought out on the Bath stage; and they are likewise endeavouring to obtain for me the situation of librarian to the new Bath Literary Institution, about to be established in that city. But there is so little certainty in any of these things, and as I have been continually deceived and disappointed in all my expectations, I am not sanguine enough to place much reliance on such bare possibilities. Yet Hope will live eternal in the human breast, and bloom like the verdant laurestina, that flings, unblasted, its beauteous blossoms abroad to the howling storms and snows of winter.

I have recently received a handsome donation, for the second time, from the funds of the Literary Society, through Mr. Britton, for which I am sincerely grateful. The readiness, as Secretary of that noble Institution, to lay my memorial before the committee, and urge my claims, does honour to his heart. I would wish on every occasion to pay my humble tribute to those who have been

my friends in the hour of adversity,—not merely because talents and abilities have ennobled many of them in the sight of the world, and entitled them to the remembrance of succeeding ages ; but also on account of a principal of benevolence inherent in them, which throws over their character and rank a tenfold glory. Mr. Britton, from his laudable exertions and studies, is particularly well calculated to appreciate the merits and feel for the situation of those who have to encounter the buffetings of adverse fortune and the insolent contempt of purse-proud greatness, ever opposed to one in humble station in his advance to reputation and eminence in the great republic of letters.

With this I send you a copy of my lines

TO THE REVERED MEMORY

Of Mrs. Henrietta Fordyce, late of Bath.

A song of lamentation, deep and loud,
Wail forth, O Avon, as thou wanderest by
The City of the Sun. Let nought be heard
Amid thy bowers of sycamore and groves
Of hazel sweet, save plaintive notes of wo ;
The widowed ringdove's silver-sounding voice,
And nightingale, of all her young bereaved,
Telling the moon her sorrows ! From their bowers
High on the Aonian hill, of old renowned,

The Muses should descend, and on thy banks
 Their harps in mournful unison attune,
 To chant a funeral dirge, more sadly sweet
 Than that ill-fated bard's, whose limbs were strowed
 By Thracian matrons o'er their blood-stained fields,
 When, on the icy banks of Strymen's flood,
 His love, twice lost, tear-falling he bemoaned,
 Till rocks and brutes his lyre to pity moved !

Shall the proud conqueror in his car of gold,
 With laurels crowned, and armour died in blood,
 Who tramples right and justice 'neath his feet,
 And on whose steps grim Desolation waits,
 Claim immortality from harp of bard—
 Whose prostituted genius consecrates
 A demon for a god,—while FORDYCE sleeps
 Unwept, unhonoured on her lowly bier ?
 Forbid it gratitude ! forbid it heaven !
 O, for a seraph's voice, an angel's harp,
 And angel skill to sweep the unearthly strings
 That I to all the admiring world might tell
 The goodness that within her bosom dwelt.
 At Wisdom's sacred and primordial spring
 Delicious draughts she quaffed, and with them oft
 Mingled pure drops, laved from the holy well
 Of Castalins famed : Her modesty
 Still o'er her merits a celestial veil
 Cast blushing, through which they brightly shone
 Like the young sun, when o'er his radiant face

Aurora sportively a broken cloud
Of fleecy whiteness flings. Her charity
Was ample as the ocean ; boundless e'en
As the blue sky that to its soft kiss bends,
Embracing all the sons of wretchedness
In its extended arms ! Yet most unlike
The noisy deep, which wheresoe'er it flows,
In thunder of its liberal bounty boasts,
Appalling those it blesses.

As through some
Lone valley steals, unchecked by summer suns,
Soft singing, like the redbreast to itself,
The limpid brook, by flowers and rushes hid,
While verdure marks luxuriantly its course,
And golden blossoms deck the mossy banks,
Where the wild ash and hazel a chequered shade
Cast on its glassy bosom, and their roots
Unconsciously life-giving moisture drink ;
On whose green boughs the grateful birds, that cool
In the blue wave their bills, and bathe their plumes,
Loud thanks melodious chant ; so from her breast
The milky streams of human kindness flowed
Silent and clear,—oft visiting e'en those
Who knew not whence they issued.

Blessed Saint !

Thou in a good old age hast bade farewell
To all the ills that haunt this vale of tears.
Care, pain, and grief in that delightful clime

Where now thou dwell'st can never, never come.
O, bliss beyond all thought is thine ! No shade
Or stain of earth is on thy spirit now !
Refined, exalted, glorified, and raised
To everlasting youth, eternal bloom,
And still increasing knowledge, thou hast met
Thy long-lost husband, tender lover, friend,
On those bright shores, whom thy fond doating soul
Delighted still to think on. Where are now
Those years that held thee from his blest embrace ?
Vanished as dreams, as troubled dreams of night ;
While in full day, a day that knows no end,
Heaven's everlasting splendours on thee burst !

Though we in sadness touch the mournful strings
Who must, yet all in vain, thy loss deplore,
Ten thousand, thousand harps soul-ravishing
Around thee ring, and thy arrival hail :
While from the Throne of Glory, wrapt in light
That burning seraphs dare not gaze upon,
A voice is heard,—“ Welcome from earth to heaven !
Thrice welcome thou, who to my thirsty lip
Didst lift the cheering draught ; and when I sank,
With hunger faint, mad'st me to eat and live !*
Who, when a stranger naked and forlorn
I wandered from my home and friends afar,

* Matthew xrv. 34, 35, &c.

Didst clothe my limbs, and take me to thy arms :
Didst visit me when I in sickness lay,
Smoothing with tenderness my bed of thorns :
And when in dungeon cast, Oh, thou didst haste
To cheer my lonely hours, and with thy love
The wretched prisoner's bitter pangs beguile !
Such to my brethren were thy deeds on earth,
And I account them e'en as done to ME.
Blest of my Father ! mount yon radiant throne,
And take the kingdom long for thee prepared !
Bring forth the diadem, ye angel hosts,
And set it on her head ! Strike every harp,
And let all heaven with loud Hosannas ring !”

LETTER CIX.

L—— Cottage.

MY FRIEND,

I am not going to copy from Brandt's *Popular Antiquities*, or Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, or from Dr. Drake's *Lucubrations*; nor borrow any thing from the *Reminiscences* of the literary friends of Ephraim Hardcastle, or quote Jonathan Oldworth, or any other of our worthies of antiquity for your entertainment. But I will attempt a sketch of some of the amusements that many years ago used to give spirit, happiness, and content to the merry-hearted rustics of this and the neighbouring villages,—all of which, from the innovating changes of manners and times, have now passed away, bequeathing a morbid dulness and gloomy apathy, in place of that hilarity and honest open-hearted laughter, which whilom often broke the sweet stillness of the Summer's evening air, as the moon arose in brightness above the distant summit of Branksome Isle, and spread its sweetly mingled lights and shadows over the grove-embowered cottages of L——.

And first, May-day,—that happy, happy anniversary, when

“The bright morning star, day’s harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowing May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose,”

was constantly ushered in with a lively peal from the three deep-toned bells of the village tower, which lifted its pinnacles above the straw-roofed cottages that clustered around it, and confronted with a noble and venerable dignity the proud battlements of that lofty pile, which was once the palace of the Earls of Suffolk.

The peasant-maidens flocked early to the dewy fields, the gardens, and the woods, to gather sheaves of fresh-blown flowers, like the Spanish damsels on the morning of St. John the Baptist, with which to deck the gaudy May-staff, and hang garlands and festoons of white roses, lilies of the valley, golden cowslips, woodbines, crimson poppies, and magical fox-glove around the elm trees that overshadowed this frequented spot, where stood the tall poll blossom-enwreathed;—the rendezvous of the young, the sportive, and the idle, and the meeting-place of the aged and garrulous, who there held every evening their

general councils, like the happy Africans beneath
their Bentang, or assembly-tree.

“Come forth, come forth my maidens, the hedgerows
all are green,

And the little birds are singing the opening leaves
between :

And let us all go forth together, while the blessed day
is new,

To dress with flowers THE MAY-POLE e'er the sun has
dried the dew.

Come forth, come forth my maidens, we'll gather myrtle
boughs ;

And we all shall learn from the dews of the fern, if our
lads will keep their vows.

There's trefoil on the meadow, and lilies on the lea,
And hawthorn blossoms on the bush, which you must
pluck with me.”*

Then the delightful music of the violin and the
pastoral reed, preluding to the evening Dance
round the garlanded May-tree, as the low sun
gilds the castle-battlements, and the lofty elms
cast their lengthening shadows across the village
green ! The swallow warbles a merrier song on
the chimney-top, and the blackbird, amid the full-
blooming hawthorn hedge, joins his melodious lay
with the mingled sounds of the peasant revelry.

* Spanish Ballad.

“ As the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound,
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequered shade ;
And young and old come forth to play,
On a sunshine holiday.”

There was John Stubbs, the stoutest wrestler within nine miles of the village, and the best at a ploughing-match in the tithing. Who drove his team to market with such care, or ploughed a land-share with such neatness and dexterity as John Stubbs? John chose for his partner in the dance, the daughter of the parish-clerk, Joe Adams, who lived to nearly one hundred years of age, and almost to my own time. This merry child of nature constantly opened the balls of the village, and was the leader of all its sports and pastimes. The Norman jig was the grand dance she always called for, in which her tall and bony figure, clad in a short gown of the largest and most gaudy-coloured flowers, with here and there the figure of a man in the mixed costume of a Turk and a Chinese introduced between them, hanging over a broad-striped petticoat of linsey-woolsey, whirled about from side to side, like a vessel with wind-rent sails in the vortex of the Norwegian Maelstrom.

Ben Roberts was the happiest of the happy, whenever he could obtain, which was but seldom, the hand of Mary Wilmot, in these joyous dances held on the village green. Mary was the personification of Hebe; in her cheeks the summer glow of the crimson-coloured poppy was mingled with the rich brownness of the ripened corn; and her darkly brilliant eyes were plentifully shaded with ample ringlets, blacker than the plumage of the youthful raven. Ben was a land smuggler, and never did he venture a freight with any of the outlawed captains on the coast, but showy gewgaws, ribbons of many colours, painted looking-glasses, beads, dollars of ten, as they were called, silk handkerchiefs, or case-bottles of the richest cordial water were included in his list of contraband goods, and designed as presents for Mary. But Mary was a thoughtless, vain, idle, laughing coquet,—a very jilt. She carried on flirtations with every new face, and considered herself as irresistibly handsome: but James Williams, the officer of excise, seemed to be her favoured beau.

Poor Ben Roberts was jealous to distraction; and Mary always took a seeming delight in giving him sufficient reason for indulging that baneful passion. One evening, as Roberts returned

from safely stowing away a cargo of smuggled goods just landed on the coast, he found Mary sitting on the knee of Williams, at a little village party to which the excise-officer was invited from stratagem, that he might not be on the look-out to interrupt the landing, or send for the military stationed in the next town for his service. Ben entreated Mary to quit the knee of Williams and come to him, but she obstinately refused. He then frantically exclaimed, "Mary! I cannot live to see you in the arms of another! I will end my existence! You do not love or regard me, and I cannot endure to see you devoted to another!" He rushed from the room, and as he passed the window he stopped, and drawing a pistol from his pocket, said in accents of despair, "Mary! God eternally bless you! Farewell! I shall never see you again!" The unfeeling maiden, nodding her head, burst into a fit of laughter. Stung to the heart by her heartless cruelty, he ran into an adjoining stable. No one attempted to follow him, either through fear, or a belief that he intended no violence: but in a few moments, the report of a pistol was heard from the fatal stable. Several persons ran to the spot, where they found poor Ben weltering in his blood; and as they lifted him from the ground, he expired without a struggle in their arms.

He was carried to his grave by moonlight. No priest attended to perform the last rites of burial. No bell was tolled ; no funeral anthem chanted. The sighs and lamentations of his kindred only were breathed over his unhallowed tomb. The sad tale is handed down from sire to son ; yet no one now can tell in what unholy spot his bones repose.

The heartless Mary went that evening to a merry junketting in a neighbouring village. She played at forfeits and blindman's-buff, and romped and laughed with the gayest there. But it is said that on her return late in the evening, she was so frightened by something that seemed not of this earth, and which several times crossed her pathway, that she never afterwards could be prevailed on to go abroad alone after it became dark.

But the gayest and bravest of the village lads of that day, was the hardy and athletic George Ford. His form was a model for a classic hero, and his face had that fine Grecian outline of manly beauty, which we so much admire in many of the inimitable statues of antiquity.

George was the undaunted chief of the smuggling sea-gangs along the southern coast ; he was successively captain of numerous vessels, which traded in contraband articles from different

states on the continent, and knew in the darkest night every sounding, creek, and port on the western shores. He was the hero of the cockpit; the mightiest in the ring; the most unwearyed at the dance; and the first in at the death of the fox. In strength he seemed a second Sampson; and in nimbleness and agility, a deer of the forest. He once took up on his back the anchor of a vessel, which five men could not lift; often carried off the sea-shore twenty casks of brandy at one time, each containing four gallons; and repeatedly has he jumped from the ground over a turnpike-gate.

Poor George, like all his brethren of the deep, had his hair-breadth escapes. Once, in the dead of winter, he was three days and three nights beating about the Channel, with only two men besides himself on board his vessel, one of whom was lashed to the helm, and the other to the pump; yet, undaunted by the opposing influence of wind and tide, and in spite of the activity of the king's revenue cruisers, he landed all his freightage in safety. When fighting under some British admiral,—for he was once pressed into the navy,—eleven men were appointed to each gun; out of that number at his gun, seven were killed. In the heat of the action, a musket-ball

passed so close to his lips, as to take off the skin from both, without doing him further injury.

The last smuggling voyage George engaged in, he brought to England six thousand five hundred casks of spirits, and safely landed them in defiance of the vigilance of government officers. He had immense credit in the islands on the coast of France, and made the fortunes of many who sent ventures by him; but was too generous, too gay, and too careless to make his own. A merchant's daughter, who resided in one of those islands, of superior education, and who had been brought up in elegance and affluence, saw the brave, the gallant, the successful, the handsome smuggler, and at once resigned her heart and her repose. George, like a true son of Neptune, stole a clandestine marriage, and bore her off with him to England. She never saw her parents more. But strength, and youth, and health could not continue for ever; and after years of vicissitudes such as attend a smuggler's disorderly and troublesome life had past, George declined far into the dreary vale of old age.

And now when he could no longer dance around the May-pole with the merry rustics; when he could no longer urge on the generous steed at the heels of the full-mouthed pack, nor

take delight, through lack of cash at the cruel sport of the cock-pit; when age had destroyed his athletic vigour, and misfortune reduced him to the shadow of himself, and he became subject to epileptic fits; he fell, seized by one of them, from the pier at Guernsey, and his head coming in contact with the rocks below, his skull was fractured in the form of a star, and a concussion of the brain was the consequence. He was conveyed insensible to the hospital, where he was soon given up as incurable; and left, without further succour or assistance, to die. His poor wife, who long had pined away her years in a miserable cottage, cut off from all refined society and wanting often the necessities of life; his faithful companion through all the changing scenes of prosperity and adversity, through youth and age, through sickness and health, now heard of his melancholy fate, and, angel-like, hastened to his assistance. She continued tenderly to nurse him, till his strength was considerably restored; and at length, by the aid of some of the generous Islanders, obtained a passage for him to his native village. He never wholly recovered his intellects; his mind often wildly wandered, while she forgot all her own miseries and disappointments in the tender duties of an affectionate wife. They ended their days almost

together in a cheerless hovel, wholly supported by the scanty and wretched pittance allowed them by the unfeeling officers of the parish.

Jane Gilbert was another of the village girls, that joined heartily in the innocent festivities of the seasons: and was one of the merriest in the May-pole dances. Her complexion was fairness itself; her eyes blue, and bright as the azure clouds of evening, when the declining sunbeams dart their laughing brightness through them; and her voice,—

“O, it was soft
As mountain echoes, when the winds aloft
(The gentle winds of summer) meet in caves;
Or when in sheltered places, the white waves
Are wakened into music, as the breeze
Dimples and stems the current.”

She loved, doatingly loved the jest-making Henry Standley; the wild, but handsome game keeper and sporting companion of a half-witted squire in the neighbourhood, whose dogs and game were his sole delight, and his rabbit-catchers and trap-setters his boon companions.

Henry Standley had won the affections of Jane, and triumphed over her virtue, and had become indifferent to her tears. A strange gentleman had made a short visit at the village, and at his

departure took Henry with him to London. The light-hearted youth was, however, kind enough to bid his Jane farewell before he set off on his journey ; but the thoughts of seeing the grand metropolis imparted a sparkling delight to his fine full eyes, that he neither strove to, nor could conceal from the weeping and broken-hearted maid. Jane, as he quitted her close embrace, fainted in his arms ; but as soon as she recovered he hurried a last adieu, promising she should soon hear from him, and that he would return ere long to be united with her in the sacred bonds of wedlock.

But alas ! London was new to him, and he was new to London. He soon lost all remembrance of his poor disconsolate Jane in the everchanging gaieties and voluptuous dissipation of the metropolis. Week after week she pined in heart-broken solitude, but no tidings came from her abandoned and forgetful lover. She was never seen to mingle with the maidens in the dance on the village green, to witness the merry drollery of the puppets, or appear at a fair, wedding, or christening, after the departure of Henry. Her life became a burthen ; she never slept but to dream of the absent youth, and all her waking hours were spent in thinking of his comeliness, his merry jests, his former fondness, and present neglect.

For one whole dark and stormy night, Jane was nowhere to be found. The next morning, the thresher on entering the barn, found the ill-fated Jane suspended, cold and lifeless, by a slender cord from one of its beams. A lock of Henry's hair was found on her bosom !

She was buried at midnight on the adjacent hill, where two roads meet ; but few followed her to an unblest grave. Yet one pitying maiden, before the earth was rudely thrown on her coffinless remains, was seen to scatter flowers bedewed with tears over her corpse. And though no rich-toned choir pealed through fretted aisles the mournful dirge, yet the mountain winds were gathered together to solemnize her dismal obsequies, and a flood of music wild and sweet rose around the unconsecrated spot ; while from the neighbouring caverns of the ocean came a plaintive wailing of many tuneful tones, like the sad hymn the Syrian maidens sang to their soft-touched lutes, for the death of Adonis, on the almond-shaded banks of the blood-tinged river. But as the horrid stake was driven through her body, a piercing shriek ran along the sea-laved cliffs, re-echoing from rock to rock, and the music mournfully faded away into the gloomy stillness of death. The earth was afterwards

heaped around the stake like an ancient tumulus, and the place, to this day, is called

THE MAIDEN'S GRAVE.

Such is the story of some of those who once were the lively actors in our village sports, whose simple legends are yet remembered by the few that love to be garrulous of by-gone days, and boast of the dances that on winter evenings were so frequently held in the barns,—those good old store-houses of plenty, of which there once were twenty-five in the parish ; but in this age of finery, improvement, and poverty, there are not four now remaining. These rustic halls of ample dimensions, festooned, not with splendid tapestry of Arras, but hangings woven from the bowels of industrious spiders, and black with dust and age; round whose walls were displayed, not the blood-stained banner and dimly-gleaming panoply of warrior knights, but the peaceful implements of husbandry, were illuminated with numerous lanterns, suspended on a long waggon-rope passing across the beams. But though these little horn temples could not certainly rival in splendour and beauty those which the Chinese carry about on their grand *Feast of Lanterns*, yet the laughing villagers could see to dance their reels and

jigs, eat their homely cakes, and drink their large brown jugs of lamb's-wool, which they always prepared of ale and roasted apples, to cheer them and their hired musician, who merrily scratched to and fro on the catgut of his crazy fiddle his horse-hair bow.

Then on the evening of the ever-memorable fifth of November, what a merry-making was there around the May-pole tree. All the village assembled at the meeting place to drink flagons of ale at the expense of the parish; guns firing, bells ringing, clouds of smoke from the pipes of the men filled with the trans-atlantic weed, making the evening air fragrant; the women chattering with an unbounded volubility of plots and popish treasons, a tremendous bonfire blazing on the green like an Indian *suttee*, and the delighted children with shouts and screams of laughter playing and dancing round the flames. Then the horrible effigies of his Holiness the Pope, and the frightful bugbear of Guy Faux were brought out to be burnt. The clerk's daughter, Betty Adams, always carried the straw-stuffed Pontiff of Rome; and swinging it round three times by the arms, hurled it exultingly into the bonfire, amidst an universal yell of men, women, and children. The beer and ale were then served

round again, and Betty Adams being presented with the first draught, took the double handled brown jug, chanting the following exquisite stave :

“ Destruction to the French and Pope,
I do long to see the hour :
Confusion to them that do set them up,
Or aid their hellish power !
Huzza ! my boys, huzza ! ”

This was chorused by all the rustics, who then joined hands, and sang and danced round the fire, till the Pope and the arch-traitor Faux were both consumed to ashes.

Harvest-home, too, O what a time was that ! —when the last waggon loaded with nodding sheaves came from the field, covered with boughs and garlands of flowers, and the ruddy sun-embrowned maidens danced with their swains behind it as the full moon rose in all her cloudless radiance and added a thousand charms to the beauty of a fine autumnal evening ; while the jovial shouts of the happy reapers resounded from grove to grove. And when the harvest-feast was spread for all the industrious poor, all the hardy peasantry on the farm, young and old, on the loaded tables of the hospitable but unostentatious farmer of those days, what smiling

countenances, what happy hearts welcomed that hour of good old English cheer!

Then how "the fueled chimney blazes wide,
The tankards foam, and the strong table groans
Beneath the smoking sirloin stretched immense
From side to side; in which with desperate knife
They deep incision make, and talk the while,"

of all their useful and health-producing labours in the field, the baru, and the woodlands. And who of the village elders but recalls to mind that ancient and rural feast of sheep-shearing? when the flocks of a thousand valleys and mountains were gathered together to be washed in the flowing stream, and then stripped of their burthensome fleeces? while the plaintive tones of their blended voices, sounded musical as the pipe of Pan amid the forests of Arcadia, or the love-tuned guitar of some despairing youth heard amid the orange bowers of the moon-reflecting Tagus.

"Vertumnus clothes the hills
With various pasture; and the bleating tribe
Stud them all over as with living gems,
The liberal gift of Nature. Albion's pride
With pride she well may boast; for hers the FLEECE
On fragrant thymy hills and flowery vales,
By hundred handed Labour, changeful Trade,

Truly converted into Fleece of Gold ;
More precious, more substantial than of old
The far-famed one of Cholchis, first enriched
With the Thessalian Ram ; which ancients say
The air-borne Phryxus from Bœotia brought,
And landed on the ever-blooming banks
Watered by rapid Phasis' crystal stream."

'Tis true, the flocks are still relieved of their winter robes ; but where is the plentiful banquet served up in smoky hall on maple dishes, that cheered the skilful and happy shearers ? Such vulgar feastings cannot now be endured in the polite dwellings of members belonging to the new school of husbandry.

But the most delightful merry-making of those days, was at the birth of a first-born child. The running gossip, as she was called, went from house to house to invite the female neighbours to be present at the time ; and one was always placed in the stairs that led to the crowded chamber, for the purpose of giving notice to another below, who stood with the tap in her hand ready to broach the barrel of strong ale the moment the child was born. No sooner were the glad tidings announced, than the chimney-corner was seen to blaze with an immense turf fire from side to side. The great groaning-bowl

was brought forward, and filled with toasted bread and strong ale, spiced and sugared. They then ate, drank, and were right merry ; while the husband and now glad father was highly congratulated, particularly if a man-child were born to him. Dancing over three high and lighted candles was also introduced, and she who was so unfortunate as to knock either down, forfeited her next draught of the flowing bowl. The joyous carnival continued till day-break, when each gossip carried home a large piece of the favourite cheese, which lay beside the bowl more than half devoured, to put under her daughter's pillow the next night, that she might dream of her sweetheart.

Alas ! those good old times of hilarity, plenty, and their constant concomitant,—Content, are banished from us ; while poverty, oppression, and an overwhelming principle of absurd pride have joined to sweep away every vestige of those manners and hospitable customs of our forefathers, which rendered the hardy peasantry the proudest glory of their country, and made them independent, happy, honest, and brave.

And what, let me ask, is the source of all the comforts, the conveniences, the luxuries, and the splendour of which the wealthy in the present

day so largely partake? from whence do these envied blessings proceed? Agriculture is their principal source, and from the toilsome labours of the industrious ploughman do they flow. Look from the wood-clad mountain's brow, and behold the goodly, the soul-cheering prospect that England,—the pride of Europe, the glory of the world,—in her days of internal peace and plenitude of dominion and beauty boasts. Not those paradisiacal scenes of the ancient Canaan, which the great leader of the Hebrew tribes beheld from the lofty summit of Pisgah, in all their pomp of towered cities, vine-spread hills, verdant fields, and shady groves of sycamore and palm, could outvie the beautiful landscapes of Albion's Eden of the West. What interesting and magnificent edifices of antiquity are hers! what venerable ruins of other days! what noble palaces rear their august heads above her waving woods! and what vast cities, that equal in riches and extent even Nineveh and Babylon of old, lift their proud towers on the crowded strands of her majestic rivers, which as they glide onward to the ocean, reflect the masts of a thousand barks, freighted with the treasures of every clime and nation! What myriad flowers bespangle her fields of eternal green, and cover, like a variegated

mantle, the hedgerows that so pleasingly divide her cowslip meadows; and what rich harvests wave on her fertile plains, and fill her valleys with plenty! These are truly golden harvests, for they are the the source of all her wealth. Her mines may yield iron and various other metals in abundance; but her *gold* is vegetable gold, which covers her lovely lowlands, more rich and useful than that which blooms on the fabled fields of Candahar, and is the secret spring of all her splendour, power, and wide-extended dominion.

And to whom are we indebted, under Providence, for this national prosperity,—for these lovely prospects? To the poor ploughman, to the humble and honest rustic, to the now hard-fed and scantily-clothed labourer of the fields, who at noon takes his frugal meal of the simplest viands on the daisied green sward beneath a canopy of hawthorn; while by his side the harmless steer, or quiet steed, patient of labour, stands waiting his command. But for the rustic cultivator of the soil, the land that now blossoms like the garden of Eden, would become a desolate wilderness; its beautiful prospects would vanish; its fields and plains be soon transformed to interminable and trackless forests; and brambles and

thorns choke up its most luxuriant pastures ;
for notwithstanding whatever the poet may dream
of the golden age, when, as Ovid and Lucretius
inform us,

"The teeming earth, yet guiltless of the plough,
And, unprovoked, did fruitful stores allow ;
Content with food which Nature freely bred,
On wildings and on strawberries they fed ;
Cornels and bramble-berries gave the rest,
And fallen acorns furnished out a feast.

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Then men were hard, as hard as parent stones,
And built on bigger and on firmer bones ;
And like the brutes, in search of food they spent their
time.

No brawny ploughman then had learned to tear
The earth's firm surface with the crooked share ;
None pruned old branches from the trees that grew,
Or dug the fruitful ground for planting new :
But all were well contented with the store
Sun, rain, and earth bestowed, and wished no more.
In woods they lived, on acorns chiefly fed,
And such wild berries as in winter-red
Become mature: the youthful world then gave
Of these abundance, more than now we have ;
And various fruits beside did then produce,
Amplly sufficient for poor mortal's use."

Yet in spite of the abundance of these hips and
haws, these must have been wretched times,

compared with the days of husbandry. To the tiller of the ground, we owe every thing that renders the present state of man comfortable and happy. The proud lord of the allodial glebe, but for the labour of the husbandman, would no longer roll in his gilded chariot of state, nor move in the glittering circle of fashionable folly and splendid vice; or find his table covered with the richest luxuries that a pampered appetite can relish,—with the most delicious wines that distant realms or the western isles can yield. Were the daily toil of the ploughman to cease, the glory of England would depart from her; the regal pomp and splendour of her palaces would fade into darkness and mourning, and her princes become slaves. Merchandise would sicken and die, trade expire; literature, the arts and sciences, be no more! Anarchy, and every species of horrible misrule, would take place of the present order of things; and famine, desolation, and death cover all the land!

How much, then, is to be lamented the utter annihilation of village sports and pastimes, a knowledge or description of which is now rarely acquired but from the chronicles of our historians. A time was, when an independent and happy peasantry was Britain's proudest boast;

the acknowledged sinews and strength of the realm. Where are they now to be found? In the wretched abodes of pauperism? In the parish annals of vice, fraud, and crime? A few splendid exceptions may, indeed, exist under the mild sway of a long-established inheritance, the holders of which are imbued and influenced by the protecting customs and paternal solicitude of their ancestors; but in the great majority of instances, the destruction of self-respect in the husbandman was attended with the sacrifice of the simplicity, the virtue, and single-mindedness of the once-happy peasant. The rapid march of luxury and refinement amongst the wealthy, paralysed and absorbed the amusements and recreations of their humbler neighbours, and left them little to brood on but present privations, and a painful retrospect of former happiness. Smarting under the effects of neglect and indifference, they became at length content, by gradual and imperceptible steps, to glide into habitual and debasing pauperism; and throwing off the garb of honesty and simplicity, they assumed the dangerous and hideous habit of unblushing dissimulation and dishonesty.

A life devoted to labour, unremitting as severe,

must surely be entitled to some little relaxations; and if the innocent, though possibly boisterous pastimes I have endeavoured to describe, are calculated to soften the irksomeness of perpetual toil, they should not be too severely judged of or checked by those in the possession of higher and *exclusive* pleasures. How anxiously and impatiently might not the long-anticipated delights of the May-day dance have been looked for, absorbing every thought and hope of the laughter-loving village-maiden! How might not the rustic youth have been stimulated to present himself before the secret object of his admiration and regard, and the assembled population of his native vale, attired in decent apparel, untarnished alike in conduct and reputation! How cheering also the prospect of the expected feast of the shearing season! And again, the severer toil and labour of a bountiful harvest how much is it to be lightened and relieved by the mirth and plenty of a glad-some supper, participated by old and young, without fear or restraint!

Under a sincere persuasion, that the character of a nation is materially influenced by a due attention to the innocent recreation and enjoyments of its humble classes,—that virtuous im-

impressions and habits will be more readily fostered, and vicious propensities proportionately decreased and uprooted,—an early renewal of similar village scenes would afford the truest pleasure to

Your friend,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CX.

From D. Cabanel, Esq. to Sylvaticus.

Bath.

DEAR SIR,

INDUCED by some extracts inserted in the *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, I purchased your two Epic poems at Upham's; and though I have not hitherto perused more than half of your first poem, it bears such intrinsic evidence of genius of a very superior order, imbrued with and directed by the best principles, that I am fully convinced it will far outlive all the licentious trash of the school of Byron, Moore, and Co. I am only sorry that the public taste is so vitiated, that it has not attained the high celebrity which it so justly deserves: but you must recollect that your great prototype, the immortal Milton, met with little better treatment from his contemporaries.

I here inclose a draft on my banker in town for fifteen pounds, as a memorial of the great pleasure I have already received from the perusal of

your works, the receipt of which I will thank you to acknowledge at your leisure. The draft is made payable to your order, which I judged the safest mode of sending you a remittance, as it will not be negotiable till indorsed with your signature. This sum, together with five pounds previously subscribed by me, added to other subscriptions, I sincerely hope will extricate you from all your present difficulties. A letter addressed to me at No. 8, Somerset-Place, Bath, will be received, in which I hope to be informed that the exertions of your friends have contributed to render yourself and family comfortable; and with my best wishes for more promising prospects, I beg leave to subscribe myself

Your friend and

humble Servant,

DANIEL CABANEL.*

P.S. I sincerely hope the sums already received, have prevented the necessity of your parting with the smallest article of furniture, useful or ornamental.

* This gentleman is the author of a volume of *Poems and Imitations*, published by Bickerstaff, London.

LETTER CXI.

From R. A. to Sybaticus.

MY DEAR SIR,

OUR mutual and benevolent friend, Mr. Wood, has hinted to me, that though I cannot boast the honour of a personal acquaintance, a line on the subject of the production of your tragedy at the Bath Theatre would not be unacceptable to you.

Allow me to assure you, sir, whatever you may have imagined of the world in general, there is a liberality extant here, that has in some measure contributed to a high estimation of your talents; and I think I may anticipate a result at once gratifying and advantageous in the production of your piece. The managers of the theatre have most willingly come into my views, and have offered all the strength they are masters of to ensure the success of the representation. Their arrangements, however, have not allowed them to appoint an earlier evening than in May; which, all things considered, may be as convenient as any other period, especially as it is my particular wish that you should be present at the rehearsals. May I expect the honour of your com-

pany during that time at my house? It is the house of a bachelor, but I know no one I shall feel more truly proud of seeing in it than yourself. With regard to the piece, I am of opinion that some of the situations might be materially altered for the better effect of scenic representation; and I should avail myself of your visit in suggesting such alterations as my theatrical knowledge may enable me to point out; though I should, without your authority, fear to do any thing, lest I should run counter to your own views. I shall in the course of a fortnight send a copy to the Lord Chamberlain for his perusal and licence; and as soon as I am favoured with his answer, I will write you the requisite information. I think our excellent friend, Mr. Wood, informed me that you had many copies in your possession, which I think you had better publish immediately after the representation as a *new edition*. The performance will, no doubt, materially assist the sale. In the interim, myself and friends will use every exertion towards the pecuniary success of the undertaking. It is impossible anything can be lost by the attempt, and it may prove signally advantageous, which will indeed afford the most perfect gratification to

My dear sir, most truly yours,

R. A.

LETTER CXII.

*To R. A.**L—— Cottage.*

DEAR SIR,

I DULY received your kind letter, and surely not the most voluptuous English opium-eater ever felt half the felicity from the golden drug, the panacea for mental as well as corporeal maladies, that I did from the perusal of its inspiring contents. It acted like a divine electricity,—if I may be allowed the term,—on my intellectual powers, fast sinking, from the want of stimulus, into the lethargic stupor of melancholy. You have anticipated more than my most sanguine hopes. Your most friendly and benevolent exertions to obtain, not only a representation, but a favourable reception of my tragedy on the Bath stage, will, on their completion, repay me for years of suffering, deprivation, and despair.

I shall be most happy to be your visitor during the rehearsals of my tragedy, and proud to avail myself of any hints your skill in dramatic situation and incident, may point out to the improvement of the piece. I hope my kind and invaluable

ble friend, Mr. Wood, will be able to recommend to me an honourable bookseller in town, to be the publisher of the remaining copies ; and who will not neglect, as others have done, to bring the work before the public in a proper manner.

And now, let me return you my most sincere acknowledgments for your friendship and liberality to an author, whose untoward fate has ever been to be oppressed, neglected, and continually checked in all his laudable aspirations and intellectual pursuits. Believe me, I cannot possibly shadow forth in words, the ardent, the grateful feelings of my soul for the warm-hearted benevolence, the god-like compassion of all my friends in Bath and its neighbourhood. Their humanity and goodness shine with a heavenly glow of overpowering splendour,—intensely heightened by the dismal, deep, and chilling gloom of ignorant pride and the most unfeeling apathy towards the sons of the harp and the song, and all their works, which reign in this inhospitable part of the kingdom, and blast by their pernicious influence the sensitive and delicate blossoms of genius.

I am, with every respect,

Dear sir, yours, &c.

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CXIII.

Bath.

DEAR FRANCIS,

I HAVE something to impart, that will give you surprise, not unmingled with resentment and disgust, at the duplicity of mankind. After waiting till all my patience was exhausted, from March till nearly the end of May, and hearing nothing from my friend R. A., nor a syllable further respecting the promised appearance of my tragedy, I determined to set off to Bath, thinking my presence might accelerate and realize those expectations held out by my friend. I reached Bath in two days on foot, and was received by Mr. Wood with greater kindness and urbanity than I can possibly do justice to, and which will never be forgotten. I found that Mr. R. A. was in London; but the next day I waited, in company with Mr. Wood, on the managers respecting the production of my tragedy on the Bath stage; when, to my great surprise, Capt. Peach, the principal, informed me that Mr. A. had named once, and only once, in a casual

way my tragedy to him one evening in the saloon of the theatre, and said something about its being acted, but he had never heard him speak a single word since on the subject. At the same time I learnt, that Mr. A. had so bestirred himself as to get a tragedy of his own acted at the Bath theatre, about the time he promised to get mine out, and was then in London for the purpose of urging Mr. Kemble to bring it out at Covent-Garden.

I might well exclaim with Metastasio, that "Hope and mistake often go together;" and say, with Juvenal,

"Rari quippe boni : numero vix sunt totidem quot,
Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili."

yet, though I do belong to the genius *irritable vatum*, which Horace talks about,—and sure no one will deny, who knows my story, that I have had my share of excitement to irritability,—I will not present a single *querelle* to the court of Apollo, or any other court, against a brother author, who had an undoubted right to prefer his own interest to that of a stranger's. Let it rest.

On leaving Bath, I set off, by advice of some of my friends there, again for London. Again I went the detested old round with the booksellers, to dispose of my *Dramatic Scenes*; and with no

better success. At length my worthy friend, Mr. S. M., regretting deeply my continual disappointments, resolved to have it published, and hazard himself every risk to serve one who had been continually subjected to such mortifying rejections. On his account, believe me, I am more anxious for the success of the work, than on my own. It is now in the press, and in a few weeks I expect it will make its appearance before the public.

On my return from London, I staid a few days at a friend's house in Salisbury; in whose company I made, for the first time, a pilgrimage to Stonehenge, that wonderful monument of antiquity, which must excite the highest interest in the mind of the beholder, who reflects for a moment on its stupendous magnitude and the purposes for which it was erected. I shall scarcely notice the idle theories of numerous writers, respecting the uses for which it was originally designed, and the people by whom they supposed it to have been built. Among the rest, that of Inigo Jones, who fancies it to have been a Roman *hypæthros*, with its Tuscan order, and that it was dedicated to the god *Cælus*, (I suppose he means *Colæus*, the Greek who discovered the Western Ocean), as being of equal

authority and weight with the opinion of those, who believed and maintained it to have been set up by the magical operation of Merlin, as a monument of the massacre of the British chiefs by Hengist and his roving corsairs.

That the Celtæ, or Kimmerian tribes, which first overspread Europe, had one common mode of religious worship, is evident, particularly from the immense ruins of a similar temple to this on the continent. I mean the temple of Carnac on the coast of Bretagne, in Gaul, the territory of the ancient Carnutes,* which far exceeded in magnitude and extent this of Stonehenge, or even Avebury, in all its barbarous glory. In the east, temples also of a like construction are still to be found. In a valley in the district of Houli Khan are numerous stone circles, in the centre of which is a lofty altar, or high place, on which are set up three stones; while the Temple of Carnac in Egypt, is formed by immense imposts resting on ornamented pillars, after the manner of Stonebenge. The Cyclops seem also to have been Celts, as the postern gate of Mycenæ is in the exact form of the *trilithons* at the temple of Stonehenge.

Diodorus of Sicily mentions a Temple of the

* Vite Monsieur Osmery, in his *Monumens Celtiques*.

Sun among the Hyperboreans, on an island in the ocean over against Gaul. If this island be not Ireland, which has been stentily disputed, it must be Britain; and, in all probability, this Stonehenge, the temple. The words of Diodorus are, "Amongst those who have written stories that appear like fables, are Hecatæus and some others, who assert that there is an island in the ocean over against Gaul, where the Hyperboreans inhabit. Latina was born there; therefore they worship Apollo, or the sun, above all gods, daily singing praises to his honour; and there the inhabitants consider themselves as the priests of Apollo. They have a stately grove, and a renowned temple of a circular form, beautified with many rich gifts; they have also a city consecrated to this god, whose citizens are, most of them, harpers, who chant the sacred hymns of Apollo in the temple." This clearly proves, that such a high place of worship existed in the British isles more than two thousand years ago; but whether the temple at Stonehenge, or the far more immense one at Avebury, or the still more magnificent one of Inis Tara in Ireland, be here meant, it is impossible at this distant period to ascertain. But the consecrated city, if I may hazard an opinion, was Saram, or, according to

the Romans, *Sorbiodunum*; which I conceive was founded by Sarron, the third king of the Britons and Celts, who is asserted in the British antiquities to have been the founder of the *Saronides*, a sect of the Druids; and if so, Stonehenge must have been the renowned high-place of worship dedicated to Apollo.

Govenor Pownall says, that the Magi, or fire-worshippers, were called *Gaws*; that they sent their missionaries from the east to these islands: if so, this temple might have been their Bethel, or *Choir Gaur*, the name by which it is known, in British history; but this, I cannot but think, is highly improbable. Choir, in the Hebrew or Phœnician language, is the *concha marina*, or round double sea-shell, which certainly represents circle within circle, and is often used to signify any lofty pile of building erected in that form.

“*Suggestus aliquis fastigiatus instar conchæ es ædificatus.*”—*Marius de Calashio.*

And in Dr. Stukeley's work on Stonehenge, is a coin, or medal, on which is the figure of this sea-shell under the words *AMBROCIE II. ET PE*; and likewise, in two others near the altar, under the *ambres* or anointed pillars of Hercules, is the same impression of the *concha marina*. The word

Gaur signifies a collecting of the people together, —*collectio congregatio*; therefore the meaning of the Phœnician name of Choir Gaur, is the circular place of the assembly, or congregation.

By some, this temple is said to have been built by the Cyclops; and it may have derived its name of Chorea Gigantum from that people, as the word giants is synonymous, according to Fosbrooke, with Cyclops. Why may not, I would ask, the Phœnician giants, (for such, if we may credit the historical parts of the Bible, actually did exist at the time of the invasion of Canaan by Joshua, who emigrated into far-distant countries about that period, as is evident from inscriptions found at Tangiers and other places): why may not they, or some of their race, have erected this astonishing temple at Stonehenge? That giants of vast stature once dwelt in this island, is no lying fable of Jeoffry Monmouth, and other still more ancient authors. We have indisputable evidence of their real existence, in the late exhumation of an immense skeleton at Weston-super-mare, a small island some time since purchased by Mr. Howe of Bristol, for the purpose of constructing on it hot and cold baths.

In the churchyard of Wolton, also, about five miles from Dorking in Surrey, was dug up in the

reign of Charles II. a skeleton which measured nine feet three inches in length. At Doward Hills, in the parish of Whitchurch, not far from Rosse in Herefordshire, some men who were digging, found a cavity which seemed to have been arched over, and in it a human skeleton, which appeared to have been more than double the stature of the tallest man now known. The bones were, not many years ago, in the possession of a surgeon at Bristol. At Corbridge, near Hexham in Northumberland, some human bones were found, about the close of the last century, of so prodigious a size, that the skeleton to which they belonged must have been seven yards high, the thigh bone measuring two yards! And at Ailmouth, in the same county, there have been found human bones of so prodigious a size as those at Corbridge. Camden, speaking of Godmanchester on the Ouse, says that "The bones of divers men dug up there, proved them to have been of far greater stature than is credible to be spoken of in these days."

But to come nearer home, in point of locality, to this very temple, I shall give the following account by Leland from the *Bibliotheca Eliotæ* : "About thirty years past, I myself beyng with my father Syr Rycharde Elyot at a monisterye

of the regular cannons called Ivy Church, two miles from the city of Saresbyri, behelde the bones of a dead man very depe in the ground, where they digged stone, which beyunge held together, were in length fourteen feet ten inches; whereof one of the teethe my father had, which was of the quantitee of a great walnutte. This have I written, because some men will believe nothing that is out of the compasse of their own knowledge. And yet some of them presume to have knowledge above any other, contemnyng of all men but themselves, and such as they favour."

Girald Cambrensis says, that the British writers called this temple *Corea Gigantum*, and said that it was brought from the remotest parts of Africa. "Now," says Aylett Sammes, "to find out an ancient tradition wrapt up in ignorant and idle tales, why may not those giants, so often mentioned, be the Phœnicians; and the art of erecting those stones, instead of the stones themselves, be brought from the farthermost parts of Africa, the known habitations of the Phœnicians?" Again, in the *Universal History*, vol. 19. it is asserted, that in one of the barrows on Salisbury "was found a weapon like a pole-axe, which weighed twenty pounds, and given to Colonel Wyndham." Now this huge instrument could

not possibly have been wielded in battle but by the hand of a giant, possessed of amazing strength.

Nimnius, the British writer, mentions this place in some of his manuscripts, which alone fully confutes all that has been said respecting its having been erected by the Danes or Saxons. It therefore is not improbable that this temple was built by the Phœnicians, and originally dedicated to the great god Hercules, whom they adored as the sun; and who is represented by many of the ancient hieroglyphers, as looking through crevices and chasms with the motto OMNIA VIDEANS.

The pillars erected on the Straits of Cadex, called the Pillars or Temple of Hercules, were in some degree similar to Stonehenge, and the Phœnicians always represented that god leaning on pillars. In the time of Henry VIII. near to this temple was dug up a table of metal, formed of tin and lead, on which was an inscription in strange characters, which none of the antiquarians of that age could decipher. The tin and lead remind us forcibly of the Phœnicians, and the characters also were probably of that nation. Be that as it may, we most certainly see in this stupendous high place of worship, a close imitation of the early Easter, or Hebrew manner of

encircling an altar of sacrifice. "And Moses rose up early, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars," &c.* Such sacred places were also, like Stonehenge, surrounded with a mound and trench to prevent profane intrusion.†

The sacred circles, or open temples, seem to have derived their remote origin from the wish to represent the eternity of the godhead, without beginning and without end; whose visible and refulgent image on earth was the revolving orb of day. The innermost circle, or the sanctuary of this sky-roofed temple, which was formed by those compages of stones termed *trilithons*, appears to have been of an oval shape, resembling an egg. This form, no doubt, alludes to that egg, which according to the doctrine of the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians, Indians, and Chinese, was the first principle of all things; and Athenagoras asserts, that the first-born god was produced from an egg. Beneath these lofty trilithons, which reared their giant heads above the other pillars of this stupendous pile, are a series of stones erected, of a different colour and shape to the rest; where, no doubt, the chiefs

* Exodus Ch. xxiv. 4.

† Exodus Ch. xix. 13, 20.

stood, according to the eastern custom, each one by his pillar during the sacrificial, inaugural, and other solemn rites, performed at stated periods within this sublime edifice. The pillar which belongs to this range of stones, and which stands beneath the highest trilithon at the back of the great hearth, or fire-stone, and opposite the grand entrance from the south-west, is loftier than the rest, and appears to have a groove on one of its sides. This I am inclined to suppose to have been the king's pillar at certain times ; or that by which the arch-druid stood in all his pontifical robes of gold and many colours.

Betwixt the first and second circle, and fronting the western entrance are two rocks, which appear like altars. I cannot imagine them, as many do, to be fragments of one of the fallen pillars. To me they have the appearance of fire altars, and probably betwixt these altars the victims were made to pass in solemn procession, who were destined to be sacrificed to Belenus, or Belatucadro, (altars having been dug up in Britain dedicated to him) the Bell or Belus of the Assyrians, or the Bel-atui, Cares, or Lord of the Assyrians, as the Phœnicians termed him, the Apollo of the Greeks and Romans, the Baal of the Canaanites, and the Bealan or the Sun of the Irish.

There is a vast pillar, or bowing-stone, which stands near the west entrance, and there is another larger one near it lying flat on the ground, which King, in his *Monumenta Antiqua*, considers to have been the altar on which the victims was slain and prepared for the sacrifice. The pits, or blood-basins, into which the life-stream of the captives was poured, after the Grecian rites, as may be seen in Homer on the descent of Hero into hell, and which King says he discovered on the vallum surrounding the temple, I looked for in vain; at most, I could find only something like the appearance of one of them. Here, no doubt, was also worshipped, with many imposing ceremonies, Taramia the thunderer, or the British Jupiter; for Taram, or Taran, implies to this day, in the Celtic language, thunder. To this god, under the name of Moloc, did the Phœnicians offer human sacrifices, and cause their children to pass through the fire: and so in like manner did the Britons and Gauls to this Taramia, or the Thunderer, offer human victims, making them pass betwixt two fires on May-day. Havillan, an ancient Celtic poet, writing of the mingled race of Phœnician and British blood in Cornwall, says that "Their spectacles, or public games in honour of their gods, were the slaughter of men, and that they drank of their blood."

What scenes have been witnessed within this once-sacred inclosure ! As I wandered between its solitary avenues, where now no sound is heard, save the melancholy voice of the desert winds, as if wailing for the departed glory of this high place of sacrifice, the visions of past ages arose before me, and the pomp and circumstance of Druidism, in all its blood-stained terrors, filled the dim aisles of the solemn fane. 'Tis eventide. Summer has clothed the vast plains which surround the temple in her greenest mantle, and showered her myriad flowers on hill and valley. The sun is fast declining towards the mountains of the west ; now the darkly-rolling clouds enwrap him in their burning skirts, and now betwixt their purple folds his beams glance transiently forth with diamond brightness, like the eye of beauty between the glossy curls of her raven tresses. There is the sound of mighty winds going abroad on the face of the earth, and the hallowed grove that spreads its deep shadows round the temple, bends its stately head to the gust, like a vessel reeling from side to side on the up-swelling surges of the gloom-troubled deep.

" 'Tis listening fear and dumb amazement all,
When to the startled eye the sudden glance

Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud,
And following slower in explosion vast,
The thunder raises his tremendous voice.
At first, heard solemn o'er the verge of heaven,
The tempest growls ; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
The noise astounds : till over head a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide ; then shuts
And opens wider, shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze,
Follows the loosened aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling, peal on peal
Crushed horrible, convulsing heaven and earth."

It is the grand sacrifice to Taramis. Thousands on thousands, collected by the sacred beacons on the distant hills, stand wrapped in solemn awe, beyond the vallum that encircles the gray pillars of the druid. The flames mount aloft from the great stone, which lies beneath the eastern trilion, the high altar of oblation ; while the two fires within the grand entrance fling their red sparks upward to the darkened heavens, as the human victims are led between them to the altar of death without the sacred rampart.

The Sarronides, with the arch-priest, are marching in solemn procession along the avenues of the mighty temple ; the druidesses and vestal

naids, clad in many colours, with branches of mistletoe, dance in mysterious circles around the gray stone colonnades, as the vates lead forth the captives, crowned with garlands of vervain and foxglove. The azure-vested bards strike their thousand harps; the notes of the pealing trumpet and warlike horn awake the deafening acclamations of the fanatic multitude, and with the dreadful voice of Taramis the thunderer, as he shouts amid the flame-scathed firmament, mingle in one grand chorus of sounds sublimely awful! Sacred water is poured on the head of the victim; he is placed on the altar, and the knife is plunged to his heart. The blood streams forth, divination performs her magic rights over the purple torrent, and utters her prophetic voice as she gazes with upturned eye in wild enthusiasm on the burning heavens, involved in the blinding glare of continued lightnings!

The mangled body is borne back to the inner circle, and the death-hymn again swells along the priest-thronged aisles of the gory temple in soul-thrilling strains sublime as plaintive, and melodious as sublime.* The king and his chiefs

* A certain author of a *New History of Wales* asserts, that the bards were a miserable set of ignorant wretches, mere blowers of rums' horns and crackers of pitchers; but we have better authority than his spleenetic assertions for maintaining that "the Druids were celebrated for the songs of

stand each by his pillar, and the mangled corse is laid a sacrifice on the altar of fire.

But who that views this ancient place of solemn meetings, can forget the grand assembly which was convened here in the fifth century, composed of Vortigern, with the princes and nobles of Britain, and that fierce sea-king Hengist, his Saxon eorls, and warrior-rovers of the ocean?*

their bards accompanied by the harp." Bryant says, from undoubted sources of information, that "the songs of the Canaanites and Cretans, which accompanied their horrible sacrifices and cruel rites, were particularly plaintive and melodious."

* "Hengist, advised of this sudden change of affairs in Britain," says Aylett Sammes, in his *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata*, alluding to the death of Vortimer, the son of Vortigern, who had driven him from the kingdom, "not to slip so favourable an opportunity of recovering his lost fortunes, with all speed raises new forces and returns. But it seems the Britons, during his absence, as may be gathered, had revenged themselves on those he left behind him; and we read of many skirmishes and one not battle fought between them, wherein the Saxons always came by the worst. Hengist therefore at his landing, finding his affairs upon the island in a lower condition than he expected, and not so able to make open war, hath recourse to his old tricks of treaty and friendship. Rid of his grand opposer, he knew well enough how to manage his interest with Vortigern, whom he had rendered obnoxious to him by ancient leagues and long affinity; proposing, therefore, nothing but terms of kindness and amity, and pretending the former breaches sprung from the ambition of Vortimer and a court-faction, he easily works with the king, especially instigated by his wife and not discouraged by his peers, to give him a personal treaty, not doubting but by such an interview all jealousies might be removed, differences composed, and a better understanding for the future settled between them. The place of meeting was appointed upon SALISBURY PLAIN, whither both parties were to repair unarmed. But Hengist, who meant nothing less than peace and had plotted a general massacre, commanded his followers to carry privately under their vestures a short dagger or spear, acquainting them before hand with his designs."

Before this altar, within the adytum, stood Vortigern, unworthily restored to his kingdom after the death of his brave son Vortimer, (poisoned by the base Rowena,) and the stern-browed Hengist, each surrounded by his chiefs and heroes: here they swore eternal friendship, each calling solemnly on the deities he worshipped to witness the oath of the covenant and league of amity which they entered into.

To Hengist and his followers was confirmed the gift of the province of Kent, from which the noble prince Vortimer and his brother Catigern had, ere their deaths, driven them for shelter to their ships, and compelled them to quit the island; while the Saxons vowed to assist the Britons on the invasion of any foreign foe, and to repel the devastating incursions of the barbarians beyond the wall of Adrian. The synod of kings and warriors then retired from the gray pillars of convocation, the assembling-place of the ancients, to the magnificent feast of friendship.

“Not in the palace proud or gorgeous hall,
The banqueting of peace; on Ambri plain
Glitter the white pavilions to the sun,
Their snowy pomp unfolding; there the land
Pours its rejoicing multitudes to gaze,
Briton and Saxon in majestic league,

Mingling their streaming banners' blazoned waves.
Blithe as a virgin bridal, rich and proud
As gorgeous triumph for fair kingdom won,
Flows forth the festal train: with arms elate
The mothers bear their infants to behold
That Hengist, whose harsh name ere while their cheeks
Blanched to cold paleness; they their little hands
Clap, smiling, half delighted, half in dread.
Upon that hated head, from virgin hands
Rain showers of bloom; beneath those hated feet
Is strewn a flowery pavement; harp and voice
Hymn blessings on the Saxon, late denounced
The implacable, inexorable foe.
Lordly they passed and lofty; other land
Save Britain, of such mighty despots proud,
Had made a boast of slavery; giant men
In soul as body. * * * *
The banqueters, like gods at nectar feast,
Sit sumptuous and pavilioned; all glad tones
From trembling string, or ravished breath or voice,
In clouds of harmony melt up to heaven:
O'erwhelming splendour all of sight and sound,
One rich oppression of eye, ear; and mind."

The sun is reclining on the western verge of
heaven. What a din of noisy mirth; what shout-
ing of wassailers around the wine-mantling bowl,
boastings of valour, and vaunts of warlike skill
and might, brawls, revengeful strife, loud laugh-
ter, cursings, and maudling vows of eternal

friendship, mingled with the pleasing strains of harp and voice of bard resound, far and near on this wide-stretched plain, covered with joyous multitudes of many nations! Mark ye the fiery eye of that stern chief of sea-kings, as he sits beside the weak-minded and luxurious Vortigern? What triumphant treachery lurks in its terrible glance! What malignant perfidy sits concealed in ghastly smiles on his fearful visage! while his heart glories that he is once more returned with added strength to the much-desired and beautiful shores of Britain,* and has now in his merciless power all the youthful and martial pride of Ynis Prythian, the flower and valour of all the ancient Kimmerian nobility!

Awake from your drunken lethargy, your idly voluptuous security, ye chiefs of Britain! The sword of an insidious and relentless foe is at your throats! Fling the uplifted mead-cup of intoxication from your hands; tear the garland of fresh-gathered flowers from your feverish brows; and snatch the helm, and spear, and beamy faul-

* As Gillies asserts that the invaders at one time returned home; and Bede, though a Saxon, admits the fact by inserting it in his history; as Hengist did not begin his reign in Kent till six years after his arrival in the island; and as there are some foreign traditions of his having founded Leyden during his absence from England, his temporary expulsion and the successful exertions of the Britons at that period, seem entitled to our belief."—Turner.

chion! Alas! nor spear, nor beamy brand, deluded and unsuspecting revellers, have ye brought to 'the banquet of death! Awake, ye dead, and start from beneath those grass-clad tombs, that surround on every side the pavilions of feasting and dissolute mirth; cast off your slumber of a thousand years, ye Celtic warriors of other days; shake your dry bones in thunder, and fright the gore-thirsting Saxons from their murderous design; or your ill-fated offspring must fall, and the sceptre of dominion pass away from the renowned race of the Cymry!

Who stands at the entrance of the royal pavilion, like a pillar of fire enwreathed with clouds of smoke? Hengist hath bared his hidden scymitar! its death-blade flashes to the setting sun! And hark! he shouts forth with astounding voice the dreadful watch words

NEMET COUR SEAXES!

Out flashed a thousand crooked knives of slaughter, and all was uproar, savage yell and howl, shrieking and carnage, blood and death!

I am, dear Frank,

Yours sincerely,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CXIV.

RICHARD CŒUR DE LION'S ARRIVAL ON
THE COAST OF PALESTINE.*A Sirvente of Vidal, his Provençal Troubadour.**

AWAKE the seraph harp, ye choirs of heaven !
 The harp with roses wreathed of paradise,
 And amaranth blooming round the tree of life :
 Awake that anthem which the morning stars
 Together sang, when earth from chaos rose
 In its sun-lighted beauty ! Lift the shout
 Which then resounded to the distant moon,
 And let it o'er the waves to Albion's isle
 Its heavenly thunder roll ! Awake the blast,
 The trumpet blast, which from the cloud-veiled heights
 Of burning Sinai roared in measures dread,
 Striking the mighty desert dumb with fear,—
 For now, he comes, the Lion of the North !—
 Britain's renowned prince,—the king of kings !
 O, sacred Palestine,—city of God,—
 Holy Jerusalem, he comes to bring

* Vidal, who displays the finest genius of all the Provençal poets, was
 the favourite of Richard, and followed him to Palestine. See *St. Palays's*
Hist. Trouv. 1. p. 55.

To thee deliverance ; who, with ashes crowned,
Sitt'st in captivity and bound with chains,
The Paynim's weeping slave.

O, weep no more !

Thy kingly conqueror comes ; and his fierce sword,
Dipped in the blood of Europe's mightiest chiefs,
Flashes with lightning fires ! It is the blade
Which still gave-victory to the British prince,
Arthur renown'd, i' th' happy isles of the West.*
'Tis edged with death : 'tis sacred to the cause
Of Christ the Saviour ; and it burns with beams
Miraculous, that all thy Pagan foes
Shall blast with quick destruction ! Yes, he comes,
Zion, to ascend thy hill, enter thy gates
Triumphant, and his laurell'd diadem lay
Low at the foot of the Holy Sepulchre ;
O'er which again shall kings of Christian line
In chivalrous splendour reign, and pilgrim-knight
And way-worn palmer unmolested kneel
To kiss the blessed shrine.

Ye beauteous shores,
Land of the promise, as upon the deck
Of Cœur de Lion's galley thus I stand,
How bounds my heart with transport to behold
Your fig-tree bowers and almond groves that fling
Their perfume on the land-breeze, stealing o'er
The calm and rosy waters like the sigh

* The celebrated Calibwino, or sword of Arthur, is said to have been given to Edward as a most valuable gift, by the king of Sicily.

Of a fond mother o'er her sleeping babe ;
To view the cedar-woods that crown your hills,
And the wealthy vine-bowers with their clustered gems
Of amethystine hue ; the myrtle shades,
That throw their fragrant blossoms on the wave
Of Belus' ancient stream, and Carmel's mount
With flowers besprent, that to the evening sun
The love-smile of their glowing beauty give ;
While he those tears, which they so fondly shed
At his departure, turns to diamond beams,
Till every bud a thousand starry gems
Resplendent wears. O blessed, blessed land !
Delightful Canaan ! every hill and vale,
River and inland sea, and grove and bower
Is hallowed and thrice sacred ; for the gods,
The cherubim and seraphim have walked
In all their burning glory, and revealed
Their radiant beauties there to man, and there
Held social converse with the sons of men !
It is the land of miracle and song,
Sublime as are the lays of paradise !
It is the land upon whose mountain tops
The God supreme, in dreadful pomp, revealed
To mortal sight the shadow of himself,
That set the skies on fire : while Israel's tribes
Bowed trembling, as his deep earth-shaking voice
In thunder echoed through the wilderness !
It is the land that Christ the Saviour trod,
The soil that drank the great Redeemer's blood !

The land in which the Son of God expired
In agonies for man ! Hail, holy land !
That patriarchs, angels, gods, Christ, and his saints
Have with their presence honoured : where have fought,
And bled, and died the warrior-martyr's death,
A thousand times a thousand red-cross knights,
Soldiers of Christ, led by the kings of the West,
The champions of the sepulchre, renowned
For glory and emprise ; who plucked the wreaths
Of chivalry from Syria's turbaned lines,
And planted on fair Zion's conquered towers
The thrice-blest Oriflamme, that flung its folds
To the glad heavens like a rich purple cloud,
Golden with sun-departing beams of light.*

Awake the martial shout ! Awake the din
Of ringing shields, and bid the cymbals clang
In concert with that warlike melody
Which fills the hero's soul with dauntless fire,
Ye sons of Albion, till famed Carmel's cliffs
To Almotana's sea and Jordan's banks
Send the glad sounds, and Lebanon return
From all her leopard-haunted caves the roar !
For Richard comes ;—the soul of chivalry,—
The pride of Europe,—eagle of the fight,—
The master of the sword of death, and flings,
O widowed Palestine of wide-spread fame,
Again thy lion-standard on the winds !

* The famed consecrated banner of the Crusaders.

See, where the walls of Acre lift on high
Their shattered battlements and ruined towers,
On the Kardanah's banks. The Saracens,
With famine worn to ghastly shadows, move
In wild dismay along those rampart heights.
From minaret, and mosque, and turret glance
The waning crescent to the downward sun ;
Who the wide western skies with arras bright
Of purple, gold, and gems, and gorgeous scenes,
Woven with the tints of heaven, hath richly hung
In honour of the arrival of my prince !

See ! the beleaguering camp, that for twelve moons
Twice-told have compassed those devoted walls,
Outpours its tens of thousands ! Mail-clad knights,
Spearmen, and halberdiers, and shielded chiefs,
And kings endiademed, from every realm
Of European climes ; while o'er them wave
Their various banners, streaming rich with gold
On the soft breeze of eve, and battle-axe,
Buckler, and panoply, and plume-crowned helm,
And fulgent trappings of the war-horse proud,
With sun-like glory flash ; till Acre's walls
And engine-battered towers seem all involved
In one wide flood of dazzling armour-light.
With what a shout they hail great Albion's king,
The lion leader of the Christian hosts !
The city trembles at the warlike cry,
And ocean from his deepest caves sighs back

The spirit-stirring sounds ! Her watchmen faint
With feebleness of heart, and from the grasp
E'en of her firmest chieftains drop the spear-
And useless faulchion ; while no more she pours
From blood-drenched battlements *Greek-fires* to scorch
The assailing foe ; its horrid death-blaze dies
Like the wild storm-attending thunder-flame,
When the young day-god rises in his pomp
To cheer the affrighted world.

And see, the sun
Sheds his departing glory on the hills
That bound yon plains ; where spreads his myriad tents
And bright pavilions, Saladin, the brave,
The turbaned chief, whose prowess in the field
Fame to proclaim hath ta'en the wings of morn,
And flown to the utmost regions of the west.
'Tis said, the magic scymitar he waves
Above his head, of Mahomet, that gives
Him victory in the battle-strife, and puts
His fiercest foes to flight. But the bright blade,
The *Calibwino* of the British king,
Shall cut his prophet's hell-forged sword in twain,
And make the crescent to the red-cross bow.

The mountains seem on fire ; and yon broad plains
Blaze with thick flashings of the Paynim ranks,
The Sultan's hovering hosts ; while gonfalon,
Tent, and pavilion, stained with gorgeous dyes,
Gleam in effulgence like the palace halls

Of eastern Genii ! Now their horsemen move
 In battle plight, like the battalion wings
 Of the radiant cherubim encamped around
 The hill of Dothan to protect the seer,
 And guard him from the Gentile ; while along
 Their burning van the gleaming instruments
 Fling music to the mountain winds, and wake
 Deep thirst for Christian blood. The surna breathes
 Its martial wail, the kio, and the daul,
 Boru and atabal defiance ring
 To the great lion's roar !

O, 'tis a sight

Worthy the saints and spirits of martyred knights
 From yonder sun-cloud leaning, to behold
 Mountain and plain, and minaret and tower,
 And rampart, galley-deck, and strand, and rock,
 Ablaze with armour glare of countless hosts
 In bannered pride of arms : to hear the voice
 Of battle-breathing trumpets far resound
 O'er promontory, isle, and ocean wave,
 Speaking the welcome of glad Palestine
 To Albion's lion chief.

Lift up thy gates,
 Jerusalem ! The hero of the isles
 To thy deliverance speeds like lightning flame.
 Fling wide thy portals, city of our God,
 And let the host of British warriors cast,
 Led by their lion-hearted conqueror, down
 Their garland-circled casques before thy shrine,

And kneel, with blood-encrimsoned brands to kiss,
In victory's gloried hour, the steps that lead,
Renowned Zion, to thy SEPULCHRE !

The above lines, founded on historical facts, I send you in the hope they will afford you pleasure.

My *Dramatic Sketches* are published, and have already obtained some favourable testimonials from many of the critics of the day. I shall copy a few extracts, to save you the trouble of referring to the various periodicals.

" These are most interesting subjects, as much above Pagan stories in usefulness, as the orb of day is brighter than the worm that glows on the earth ; and without approving every passage, we can assert that they are described with spirit and pathos. O, that the lovers of poetry would burn every volume of the Satanic school, and purchase such works as that we now recommend ; then they would be able to gratify their taste without risking their salvation. As young people will read poems, it will be happy for them if they lose no time in obtaining these *Dramatic Scenes*.—*Baptist Magazine* for April, 1826.

" Early in the summer of 1825, his *Dramatic Sketches* were published, a poem which we strongly recommend to the notice of our friends. The specimens

we give will sufficiently evince the very great beauty and sweetness of this author's poetry."—*Time's Telescope*.

"Mr. — has rendered a service, we think, to education in this respect. He has shown that the incidents, of which we all know the outline, are capable of furnishing out pictures of rich delineation and of effect. We need only cite the description of the army of the Israelites before the walls of Jericho.

Whoever has been at the exhibition of the Royal Academy, must be strongly reminded by this extract of Mr. Danby's picture of the delivery of Israel out of Egypt. The two scenes are represented indeed under different aspects,—one glittering, and brilliant, and splendid with the rays of the morning; the other immersed in a tremendous and supernatural gloom: but there is in both the same developement of the principle of multitude; the hosts of the Israelites appear in both to be countless, and yet in both there is given much of detail and individual delineation. In both, too, a very poetical and imaginative use is made of those sublime appearances, the pillar of fire and the cloud.

We are not speaking of the finish and execution of the separate parts of the picture, or passages of the poem; but we advert to the work of each artist as illustrating the application of the imagination to sacred subjects. In this view, *Dramatic Scenes* merit the particular attention of those to whose care the forma-

tion of young minds are intrusted; and who are so often at a loss to find works which, while they amuse and delight the fancy, may serve to strengthen the associations of religion and virtue."—*New Times*, No. 8464.

"These *Dramatic Sketches* are eight in number. They are, it will be seen, well chosen, and many of them are in themselves highly dramatic: they have however been rendered doubly so by the author, who is extremely felicitous in his treatment of sacred subjects. There is a richness of versification often rising into sublimity in some of these pieces, which would do credit to any poet of the present day..... We have rarely met with a volume which contains more genuine poetry, or displays a better feeling than these *Dramatic Sketches*."—*Literary Chronicle*, No. 307.

"Mr. — is beyond doubt a man of taste and feeling, who has thoroughly acquainted himself with the peculiar beauties of the Hebrew poetry, and who has succeeded in a very happy degree in embodying, with dramatic effect, some of those touching narrations which fired our imaginations while as yet we sat at our mother's knee, and which can never fail to awaken interest while reason and feeling hold their seat. The sentiment of this volume, as far as we have been able to make ourselves acquainted with it, is without a taint; the language and imagery are easy and well

sustained ; the allusions to patriarchal life and eastern customs are appropriately managed, and the effect of the whole is to afford delight and improvement."—*Evangelical Magazine, N. S. No. 35.*

" These *Dramatic Sketches*, as the title implies, are short, and confined to some of the most prominent events of Sacred History ; and from their conciseness, simplicity, and beauty, are likely to be extensively read ; and will, no doubt, be esteemed a valuable work for the higher classes in every establishment for the instruction of young persons.

Replete with interest and pathos, this work is well calculated to win to an attentive perusal the most careless ; whilst abounding in sublimity of thought and sweetness of numbers, it is likely to be prized as a favourite volume with the young and the fair."—*West of England Miscellany, Vol. xi. N. S.*

" Mr. — has chosen beautiful subjects for the work now under review ; and although we are acquainted with them in the source from whence they are drawn, yet we are pleased to see them in the attractive melody of the Muses. The same smoothness of versification and strength of conception reigns throughout the work, which abounds in passages equally beautiful as those we have extracted, and exhibit a deep reading in Scriptural subjects, a command of language, and that warmth of expression indispensable in poetic composition. We

sincerely congratulate the author on his production, which we hope may obtain that share of public patronage which should ever be the concomitant of merit."—*Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, No. 648.

"Mr. — is the author of two Epic Poems, the neglect of which by the Reviewers of the day, appears to have operated painfully on a sensitive mind, conscious of its powers, and struggling with adverse circumstances. We would comfort him, if we could, by recalling to his memory how many of the sons of genius have breasted the billows of despair with manly vigour, and surmounting all opposition, have rode triumphantly on the wave which threatened to break in ruin around them,—and have landed at last in the haven of their highest hopes.....In the volume before us, he has dramatised Scripture scenes with considerable taste and effect. Nor can we imagine that any pious ear can be offended at an attempt in which Mrs. Hannah More has been successfully employed. We tremble, indeed, lest the simplicity of that Holy Book should be profaned by vulgar hands; but to a man like Mr. —, combining the rare qualities of piety and song, the Bible must present many favourable themes for poetical paraphrase."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1826.

In addition, I send you some lines from the *Literary Chronicle*, by Mrs. Carey, author of *Lasting Impressions*.

On reading the poetry of —, and the remark of the Editor of that liberal and honest journal "on the stubborn silence and haughty neglect of certain reviewers."

" Oh ye who love the sacred haunts to tread,
Where heaven-born GENIUS hides his pensive head,
And pours, unheeded by the vulgar throng,
To woods and wilds his sweetly varied song ;
Oh pause a moment now to list the strain
That falls on Feeling's ear, nor falls in vain.
Yes,—pause, and hear no common bard portray
The hopes and fears of life's uncertain day ;
Wander with him through Fancy's brightest bowers
And cull a wreath of freshest, loveliest flowers :
Then weep to think how soon those flowers may fade,
Doomed by neglect to perish in the shade.
But shall they perish ? Shall their lovely bloom
Sink unregarded to Oblivion's tomb ?
No ! Kindred souls shall bid their beauties live,
And Taste accord the meed, that Taste alone should
give."

To this short but sweetly poetic effusion, I wrote the following reply, which appeared in a subsequent number of the same periodical.

Lady to me unknown ! and hast thou shed
A wreath of roses on the minstrel's head ?
That o'er the darkness of his wayward doom
Blooms, like a garland round the lover's tomb ;

Or some rich flower amid the desert heath,
That bends the wild autumnal storms beneath ?
The pitying tones of thy melodious lyre,
That breathes true inspiration's magic fire,
Come o'er his miseries like a sun-gleam sent
Through the dark thunder-riven firmament.
O, for the honour thou the bard hast paid
May thy fair muse, when he in dust is laid,—
Who ne'er again the harp's ecstatic string
Shall joyous strike, or ancient legends sing,—
Achieve the summit of eternal fame,
And distant ages laud thy honoured name !
May peace and pleasure strew thy path with flowers,
The brightest, sweetest culled from earthly bowers ;
With roses' Love thy midnight pillow spread,
And guard from every thorn thy slumbering head !
And when, sweet star, thou setts't, no more to rise
The beamy glory of Parnassian skies,
Mayst thou, amid the heaven of heavens, outshine
In song and splendour,—not the fabled Nine,—
But those fair minstrels, who in robes of light
Around that bard, released from tenfold night
The mightiest of the mighty when below,
Whose numbers with seraphic raptures flow,
To sacred measures dance, and wake the string
Of praise and glory to th' eternal king !

The *Sovereign*, a London paper, has done me the honour to compare part of my *Cain and Abel* with some of the lines in Lord Byron's *Cain*, and

decidedly to extol the poetry of your friend, as far as the comparison runs, above that of the noble bard.

My friend Carrington, the author of *The Banks of Tamar*, says in a letter which I received from him a few days since,

“Thanks for your lines on WISDOM in your *Dramatic Sketches*.—They are beautiful, very beautiful. So think the few literary friends that I have here. I speak it in all honest sincerity,—you have a glorious pen. Keep up your spirits, my dear fellow: success must come at last.

‘He has one fault,’ said a friend to me last week, speaking of you; ‘he is too rich in expression. There is a splendour, a continued splendour, in his lines, which is scarcely to be borne. He is like the girl in the Fairy-tale, who could not speak without emitting diamonds, pearls, flowers, &c.’ A glorious compliment, but not beyond what your talents merit.”

But the *Methodist Magazine* has thought proper to pursue a different course to the publications I have quoted. In its notice of this my last production, the Editor, on announcing the title, and without giving a single extract, most kindly advises me, as I have published so many works which do not seem at all to succeed, that I

should not trouble the public with any more of my effusions. I no sooner read this report, than I immediately addressed a letter to him complaining, but in gentle terms, of the cruelty of such a notice ; and requesting that to convince me of his impartiality and willingness to do every justice in his power, he would give my lines on Wisdom a place in his periodical, as a fair specimen of my poetical powers. This request he thought proper not to comply with. I afterwards sent him an original piece, *The Pursuit of Pharoah*, for his poetical department ; hoping that, if inserted, it might operate against the prejudice which his reproof must have created amongst his readers. This justice was also denied me, and no further notice taken of me or my lines.

When last in London, I was introduced by my worthy friend the Rev. Mr. R——, to the lectures given at the Royal Institution ; and I cannot express to you how highly I was gratified with a most interesting one delivered by Dr. Augustus Bossy Granville, on an Egyptian mummy. This mummy was enclosed in a case similar to those in the British Museum, highly finished, and profusely ornamented with hieroglyphics. On removing the exterior covering or coffin, the body

was found wrapped in folds of linen, a part of which I have in my possession, comprising every kind of bandage known or used by modern surgeons, or practitioners of other days. Around its feet was a swathe about the width of a hand, of many yards in length. The whole of the enclosing cloths weighed 28lbs. The amazing art with which this mummy was enclosed in its various wrappings would, according to the Doctor, puzzle the most accomplished medical man in Europe of the present day to equal. Mummies hitherto have been found merely dried skeletons; but this remarkable and curiously preserved subject had not only flesh, sinews, &c., but some of the joints were absolutely pliable. The face was covered with a mask of a kind of bitumen, by which the nose was flattened; the teeth appeared perfect. On opening the skull, the whole of the cerebra were found removed, but the membrane on which it rested remained intire; which plainly proved no corrosive injectment had been used, as that which would have destroyed the brain, must have also injured the supporting membrane. Here we have a striking proof of the consummate art of the ancients. No surgical skill of the present boasted age,—full of quackery and ephemeral pretensions,—could extract the

cerebellum without injury to the membrane; therefore this must have been a wonderful operation, totally lost to the sapience of the present day.

An injectment had been however used, which ran round the whole of the inner part of the head; as a black substance, which must have been a liquid, and strongly injected, had forced its way through the sutures, and was plainly visible. The tongue remained, and the vacuum between the roof and the upper part of the tongue was filled with cloth. No incision appeared in the abdomen. The integuments were perfect. The pericardium adhered to the heart, and the diaphragm was discernable: part of the kidneys with a fragment of the bladder remained, and the mammæ, though lengthened, were perfect. The Doctor then proceeded to prove, by analogical or comparative anatomy, that this Egyptian mummy was a female; that she had been married, and the mother of children; likewise the age at which she died, and the disease which caused her death. From the formation of the head, and the height of the body, which was exactly the same as that of the *Venus de Medicis*, while every part was in the most delicate, just, and exquisite proportion, the Doctor asserted that this mummy must have

been an Egyptian Venus! Or more strictly speaking, according to the Doctor's theory, that she was of the beautiful race which anciently inhabited the vicinity of Mount Caucasus. This discovery, he maintained, completely overthrew the theory of most of our antiquaries, now pretty universally received;—namely that the ancient Egyptians were a colony of Ethiopians, who originally crossed the Indian sea from the east. In this, however, I think the Doctor to have completely failed: for this once-enchancing beauty might have been imported either as a slave, or a bride to some Egyptian prince or noble personage from Caucasus, or from Scythia or Greece; and therefore as an individual cannot possibly go one step towards proving that the ancient Egyptians were not of the Ethiopian or Indian race, any more than the perfection of beauty and symmetry of shape in this mummy Venus,—this *belle ideal* of two thousand years ago,—can be a criterion or standard by which to judge of all the Egyptian females of her age in that land of learning, mystery, and wonder.

There is one argument which I do not remember to have found anywhere made use of, to prove that the ancient Egyptians, or rather Ethiopians, were an eastern colony,—namely, the rock-tem-

ples discovered in Upper Egypt and Nubia, being very similar to those of Elora, and other parts of India: for Sir William Jones also says in his first discourse, delivered before the Asiatic Society, "Egypt had unquestionably an old connexion with this country (India), if not with China, since the language and literature of the Abyssinians bear a manifest affinity to those of Asia." Again, discourse viii, "I believe, on the whole, that the Ethiops of Meroë were the same people with the first Egyptians; and consequently, as it might be easily shown, with the original Hindus." From this people came, no doubt, the knowledge and religion of the Greeks, whose mythology, ornamented by their poets, may be all referred to Egyptian manners, customs, and religious rites. "The Ethiopians affirm that Atlas, Orion, Orpheus, Linus, Hercules, Prometheus, Cadmus, and others, had from them the first light of all those arts, and sciences, and civil policies which they afterwards professed and taught others; and that Pythagoras himself was instructed by the Lybians,—to wit, from the south and superior Egyptians: from whom those who inhabited nearer the outlet of Nilus, as they say, borrowed their divinity and philosophy, and from them the Greeks." *

* Sir Walter Raleigh's *World*.

Doctor Granville next went on to prove, that he had by experiments discovered the whole process and art of the Egyptians in preparing their mummies, a full account of which my letter will not admit, for want of room. It seems principally to have been a composition of wax, which in the Coptic or ancient Egyptian language is called *mum*. The liquors which he had extracted from this mummy were exhibited in bottles, and their nature explained. The sinews of the legs, &c., being partly stripped down, appeared like tanned leather; while other fleshy parts, taken from the body and shown round on a plate, were still soft, spongy, and pliable. The embalming of the dead arose from the same desire, as that of burning the bodies of deceased relatives by the Greeks and other nations, and enclosing their ashes in glass and various vessels which they kept in their houses:—namely, to give an immortality on earth to those they revered and tenderly loved. The inspection of these mummies proves a great surgical and anatomical knowledge to have been possessed by the ancients, with an intimate acquaintance with the powers and preparations of drugs; whence arises another inference, that in order to have obtained such knowledge, they

must have been good naturalists, and proficient in the science of chemistry.

Herodotus and Diodorus have been somewhat diffuse on the subject of Egyptian embalming. It was a solemn and important ceremony. The body was washed with perfumes, and was thirty days in preparing for interment. The cerebra were supposed to have been extracted through the nostrils by a crooked instrument of iron, and a particular officer made an incision in the side of the abdomen with an Ethiopian stone,—such probably as was used by Zipporah, when she circumcised her son, (Exodus iv. 25.);—immediately after which, he was compelled to fly, being pelted and followed with maledictions; it being deemed a crime to injure or offer any indignity to a corpse. The embalmer then extracted the viscera, leaving the heart and kidneys, and filled up the vacuum with cinnamon, myrrh, and other spices. The bowels were washed with odours, and thrown into the Nile. (Plut. 11. 159.) An injection was then made, which destroyed by its corrosive qualities whatever parts of the viscera might remain. The spices which the caravan of Ishmaelites was conveying from the east down into Egypt, when they took with them Joseph as a slave, were no doubt used for

the purposes of embalming, and must have made a considerable portion of traffic in the kingdom.

But to return to the Egyptian Venus. As the black and mutilated remains of this once-beautiful lady lay on the table before us in the lecture-room of the Royal Institution, I could not but look back, my friend, into the cloudy dimness of two or three thousand years ago. How many lovers in those now distant ages, hush with rapture on the smiles that once flung the sunlight of beauty o'er that dismal countenance, blackened and shrunk up like a burnt scroll! Those ghastly lips, disparted from the pure ivory they once inclosed, were deeper-hued and lovelier than the rosy-red blossoms that scent the heaven of Ind. How many nobles and princes have gazed on them in all the fervour of love's homage, and sighed in vain to imprint on their ruby loveliness the impassioned kiss of transport! Those arms, that once fondly pressed the idolized object of her affections, that clasped in their maternal embrace the tender infantine pledges of love, rest in bony movelessness on a cold bosom, from which for ages on ages have fled all those varied passions, that once caused it to heave and throb like the soft undulations of the evening's summer

ocean ! Those eyes, once serene and lovely as the sun-lit azure of the morning skies, the star-like orbs of attraction, have gazed on the pyramids in all their early pride and glory ;—have illumed with their lustre the midnight halls of Thebes, in its gigantic magnificence at gorgeous festival and splendid banquet ;—have looked on the collossæan Memnon with delight, as the first rays of the laughing day-star awoke the enchanted spirit of music that animated the god-like statue ;—and have often bent their radiant beams to earth, before the awful shrines of the hundred-gated Hecatompnylos ! Now thick darkness hangs on their orbs, and all their sunlight beauty have long set in eternal night !

Proud lady ! thou hast been fondly rescued from corruption, and the worm has never rioted on the vermillion bloom of thy soft cheek. But has all the care of thy friends and relatives, who hung in tears o'er thy corse, been able to save thy soul-subduing beauty from decay ? to give immortality to thy fame, thy virtues, and thy charms ? No ! let the grave, so long deprived of his due, receive thee thou mangled deformity, thou dismal relic of all that once was graceful, bewitching, and divine ! Thy worshipped spell

of beauty is dissolved ! Let darkness hide thee,
and be thou transformed to that from which no
created power or loveliness can claim exemption,
—even to dust ! the humble origin of the greatest
and the proudest that ever eyed their “shadow in
the sun,” or descanted on their own importance
and power !

I remain,

Yours truly,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CXV.

L—— Cottage.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE the painful task to inform you, that my beloved and tender mother, after a lingering illness of some months, departed this life on the 28th ult. about eight o'clock in the evening. Though she has lived to a good old age, (for I, her only son, was born out of time and hope I might almost say, my mother being in her 47th year when I came into the world), yet O, how hard have I found it to part from her for ever ! while her dying agonies to me were more grievously afflictive than I can possibly attempt to describe ! To my dear mother's early instructions and fondly paternal care, I owe every thing ; and whenever I returned from my weary wandering to my peaceful home, her arms were always the first to welcome the world-disgusted pilgrim back. O, how painful was it, then, to hang weeping over her in the agonizing moments of dissolution ; to mark the last feeble efforts of nature, in her unavailing struggles with the universal conqueror ; to hear

her parting sighs grow fainter and fainter, till they almost imperceptibly sunk into the eternal silence of death,—when all was still,—and the happy spirit, released from the evils attendant on age and sickness, returned beautiful, bright, and swift as the sunbeam to the bosom of its Father and its God !

O, you have never yet felt how heavily the dismal tones of the passing bell strike on the heart, when they proclaim the final departure from all below of a dear-loved and affectionate mother ; when nought remains but the pale insensible clay, wholly unconscious of your tears and unavailing sorrow ! And O, in the midst of that sacred grief, how tremendously august is the reflection that the veil of mortality is drawn aside, that the grand impenetrable mystery of the tomb is at length revealed, to obtain a knowledge of which DEATH, with all its terrible sufferings, must be the price paid ; and that she, whom you so fondly bewail, is entering wrapt in trembling astonishment on a scene of immaterial pomp, totally unlike any thing earthly, where all to us is incomprehensible and unutterable sublimity !

I conclude my short epistle, with a few lines on the death of my lamented parent.

THE tale is told ! The dream of life is o'er !
Its joys, its sorrows, storms, and brightness past !
The sun is set ! A long, long night is come ;
But a new morn shall break of light and life
On the cold darkness of the tomb, and shine
With everlasting splendour. Then shall wake
To endless joy, my Mother.

'Tis summer-tide. The air is balmy soft,
Full of sweet sounds that speak of hope and joy ;
While as the summer-corn, fresh-waving, bends
In homage for his ripening beams to the sun,
Taking his kind farewell, the lark upsoars
And to the ploughboy, his companion, sings
A parting roundelay.

Floating on her sun-coloured cloud, the eve
Comes down the valley, clad in that dim veil
Of mistiness which to the day-scorched flowers
Refreshing dews impart. But O, those notes,
Those death-bell notes, how drearily they fling
Their dissonance upon the weary breeze,
That 'neath its doleful burthen seems to sink
Bewailingly ! How ill accords that knell
With the love-warbling melody of woods
And hawthorn-blossomed hedgerows, where the bird
Of ebon wing sings to his brooding mate
A wild and passionate ditty. O 'tis like

The deep-toned voice of th' arch-demon mid the choirs
Of blessedness, when he before the throne
Accused the righteous !

Behold a weeping train, in dark array,
Along the " churchway path " now slowly moves.
My dearest mother, to thy last dark home
We follow thee :—there, there, alas ! to part
For ever ! O, how mournful peals the chime
From yonder ivied tower ! A few years past,
Those very bells how merrily they rang
To hail my mother's bridal ! Then, ah, then
Beauty and laughter-loving youth were hers ;
And O, that heart, now cold and still, beat high
With passionate joy, and eager hope, and love
That gave the hours enchantment ; and o'er all
Life's bright enjoyments tenfold splendour cast.
Ah, how far off then seemed this eve of tears,
This distant day, that gives thee to the grave,
Thrice blessed mother, and beside my sire
Lays thee a clay-cold corpse !

No bridal bed is the dark tomb, although
Thy shroud is strewed with summer's brightest flowers.
The blossom-covered woodbine, fragrant thyme,
Rosemallow, rosemary, and briar sweet,
Night-blowing lilacs and the scented bay :
In desolate endless night these flowers must fade.
And he who fondly doated on thee once,

Lifts not his fleshless arms with kind embrace
To welcome thee to thine eternal rest,
To those deep slumbers which the thunder-swell
Shall ne'er awake ! No ! darkness and the worm
Are their companions at this meeting hour ;
And *dust to dust* is the sad spousal hymn !
And this is life !

And must we part ? for ever, ever part,
My kind, my dearest mother ? How the sound
Rends my poor heart, as slowly, heavily
They lower the coffin down ! But there's a voice,
A heavenly voice comes on the evening air
With solemn tone, that consolation speaks
As now it utters, *Blessed are the dead
That die i' th' Lord ; from henceforth they shall rest
From all their labours.* One last, lingering look
Upon thee in thy darksome narrow house,
Sweet mother, who so fondly in thine arms
My infancy didst cherish ; on whose breast,
Lulled by thy voice, I've sunk so oft to sleep,
And waked to meet thy soft maternal kiss :
Then farewell, blessed mother ! yes, farewell
For ever, and for ever !

No more when I, a wanderer through the world,
Return heart-broken, or with hope elate,
To my loved cottage-home, wilt thou outstretch
Thine arms to welcome me, or kindly soothe

My grief-worn spirit, or partake my joy.
No, I must never, never hear again
Thy voice, my Mother !

O, ever hallowed be thy humble grave !
May no rude foot profane it : violets spring
Around the sacred spot ; and in those groves
That spread their shade about yon place of tombs,
Ye forest minstrels a wild requiem chant
For the beloved dead !

Yes, though no solemn swell of organ dirge
For thee through dim cathedral aisles hath pealed,
Yet will the thrush, the ouzel, and the dove
Mingle their rich and soothing minstrelsey
In yonder laurel-bowers, that bloom above
Thy new-made grave. And when the mournful train
Are all departed, and to solitude,
Silence, and dark decay have left thee quite,
They, like a band of spirits invisible,
Will sweet twilight requiem chant around
Thy last dim dwelling place ; and plaintive winds
Shall join with them their soft inconstant song,
As mid the aspen leaves and elm-tree boughs,
Like virgin fingers o'er the harp-strings laid,
They wander for sweet music.*

* The Churchyard of L—— is remarkable for the singing °

And e'en when winter tempests rock yon tower,
And the neighbouring ocean, vexed to madness, raves
Wrathful to all his shores, the redbreast's voice
Shall o'er thy dust be heard at evening hour
Warbling his pensive ditty to the storm.
O, should I wander to the far-most isles
Of ocean's wide dominion, fancy oft
Will lead me, a sad pilgrim, to thy tomb ;
And I shall kneel and pray, and converse hold
By that green hillock with thy spirit blest,
My dearest Mother !

The tale is told,—thy dream of life is o'er,
Its joys, its sorrows, storms, and brightness past,
Thy sun is set, my Mother !

Still I continue,
Yours in truth,
SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CXVI.

L—— Cottage.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

IN a former letter,* I told you of an engagement I had entered into for supplying a certain provincial newspaper with an original article every week, for which I was to receive a fixed annual sum. The proprietor, as I remember to have told you, appeared to be a gentleman of engaging manners, liberal-hearted, and disposed to show towards me much friendliness. You know how easily I am won by the least appearance of sincere kindness, and so much desire did he evince to serve me, that he soon obtained a candid avowal of my real situation, and that the consideration I was to receive from him was the only dependence I then had for the subsistence of myself and family.

Our written agreement stipulating that I should supply an article every week, I took the opportunity when dining with him some time after, of requesting him to release me from being

* This having been mislaid or lost, is wholly omitted.

tied down to a compulsory contribution ; as I felt greatly averse, more to the idea than the reality of such a binding task, fancying it somewhat like a heavy chain flung round the wings of my imagination. He instantly, and with the most good humoured *naïveté*, giving me his hand at the same time, pledged his word and honour as a gentleman that he fully released me from the strict letter of the agreement, and bade me supply the articles as I felt inclined ; while I in my turn promised that the paper should not be a loser by his liberal conduct, as whenever I neglected to write for it one week, I would the next double at least the original matter for insertion in its columns.

After receiving the first six months' salary, a year elapsed, and I could not obtain from him a single farthing. I repeatedly wrote to him, but my letters were not attended to. I applied personally, and promises were my only payment. I cannot forget calling on him about ten months ago : I and mine were at that time suffering numerous privations, many inconveniences and vexatious annoyances owing principally to his non-payment, and of this he was perfectly aware. I found him surrounded with a party of jovial friends at a splendid table covered with a dessert of the choicest fruits of the season in a service of

superb cut glass, and drinking French wines of the most delicate flavour; while I at the very time scarce knew how to obtain a crust of bread. And what did I receive from this modern Dives, who was literally at times clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day? Why not so much as the poor beggar of old, for he did obtain the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table! No: my reward for my literary labours was a more than usual quantum of empty promises of speedy payment, and that my next new work should have the most flattering critique in the *Westminster*, as, in his wine-inspired vauntings he assured me a relative of his wrote for that review, and could insert in it whatever he pleased. Six long and tedious months past away, during which I still continued my contributions, and no money whatever came, nor was the least notice taken of my earnest request for an immediate remittance if even but of a trifling part of my due. My patience worn out with waiting a year and half, I gave up all hope; and by the advice of my friends I put my bill into the hands of an attorney. And what was the result? you naturally inquire. Why this honourable gentleman in reply to my attorney stated, that I had not fulfilled my engagement by supplying regularly an

article for his paper every week, and consequently he considered that a certain sum, naming somewhat more than half that which was justly due to me, would be an ample remuneration for the labours of my pen ;—although whenever I missed sending an original communication for one week, I the next sent two and sometimes three articles of poetry and prose which were inserted in the same columns, as may be proved by reference to the file. Fearing the expenses of a court of law, I consented to the injustice of receiving this proffered sum ; but not one farthing of it have I up to the present hour been able to obtain.

This man sits by virtue of his office in the magisterial chair, is the representative of royalty, the impartial dispenser of justice : he gives his civic banquets in the most splendid taste, and magnificent display and parade are his idols, to which he immolates the feelings of the unhappy. But that is nothing in this refined age ! He mixes with the best society, and is looked up to and applauded by the rich and the powerful. Let it pass. My old fate clings to me, and I am still the victim of deceivers ! *

But I have something of a different import of

* These remarks are not intended to apply to the Editor and Publisher of the paper alluded to.

which I must inform you. My Tragedy, refused at Drury-Lane, has been twice performed at the Theatre Royal, W——; first for the benefit of Miss Hargrave, and again by desire of the mayor of that town. This piece,—though unaided, for the greater part, by all the ornaments and advantages possessed by a London theatre, which consist of the most finished acting, magnificent processions, original music, splendid and appropriate costume, and beautiful scenery, and which have rescued many dramas from complete condemnation on the first night of their representation,—notwithstanding the lack of such powerful auxiliaries, this Tragedy, affording ample occasion for their full display, succeeded, believe me, beyond my most sanguine expectations. The performers were all exceedingly perfect in their parts, and did everything in their power to support the piece; and I must do Miss Hargrave the justice to say, that such was the grace, energy, and pathos with which she performed on those nights, that I neither hope nor wish to see a more correct and charming representative of my heroine. With such a perfection of the imitative art, and so real a love for the character as she possessed, which threw a perfect enchantment over the scene whenever she appeared, it is no way surprising

that the piece gave the lie to the judgment of the Drury-Lane Committee by the unqualified approbation which it received from a crowded and delighted audience.

I will copy for your reading what the *Literary Chronicle*, (No. 388) says on the subject,—that independent and impartial periodical, which deserves the highest encouragement for the readiness it has ever shown to bring forward merit, wherever found, to the notice of the public.

“ W—— THEATRICALS.

The lovers of the Drama at this once regally-honoured and still fashionable watering-place, have during the past week experienced a treat of no ordinary kind: first by the representation of a new Tragedy from the pen of Mr. —, (whose beautiful Poem entitled *The Artist* we in No. 386 extracted from *Death's Doings*); and secondly, by witnessing the personation of the principal female character in it by a highly-talented actress of the name of Hargrave, who, according to provincial rumour, is shortly expected as a star of the first magnitude to illuminate one of the metropolitan winter theatres. This Tragedy has been printed, but never before acted; and though we cannot find room to give the plot or allude to the chief incidents, we feel a pleasure in adding the following general observations, ardently hoping, for the author's sake, that the opinion here

given of its merits, may ere long be established by its successful representation in London. This Tragedy is full of specimens of dramatic as well as poetic beauty ; but at the same time it must be acknowledged, that the author has considerably improved the latter scenes and the *denouement* by the most judicious alterations from the printed copy. The interest of the piece increases with every successive scene : there is no point where it flags for a moment. It is now carried on to a perfect climax to the very close of the terrible catastrophe, like a rapid and mighty river that continually swells in magnitude and grandeur, till it disembogues itself in awful sublimity into the bosom of the roaring deep. We neither fear nor hesitate to pronounce this Tragedy, as acted on Wednesday evening, one of the best dramatic pieces that have been written for many years. Miss Hargrave in Elwina performed admirably, with such a truth to nature and feeling, such a fearful and agonizing effect, as to draw tears from almost every eye, and spoke her the complete mistress of the heart of every one present.

‘ An author,’ says a certain critic, ‘ may evince the very highest power as a dramatist, and yet his performance not afford a single striking quotation ; on the contrary, he may possess very little of that metaphysical acumen which constitutes the tact of the dramatist,—and yet his works may furnish splendid specimens of poetry. Glover, in his *Medea*, is an example of the

latter. In the *Coriolanus* of Shakspeare it would be difficult to find five successive lines with any ordinary degree of poetical merit; and yet, perhaps, the play taken altogether is one of the best of the greatest dramatist that ever appeared.' This new Tragedy (which no one who has seen or read it will deny,) possesses numerous poetical beauties of no common order; and also, as we think is now clearly proved, a sufficiency of stage effect, dramatic incident, and pomp of circumstance, to render it highly pleasing and attractive on the stage. Such was the complete success of the piece, and its rapturous reception by the audience, composed of all the beauty, fashion, and talent of W——, that it was again performed by express desire and under the patronage of the Mayor.

We are happy to find that on the second representation of this piece, its success was more complete, if possible, than before; and there now appears to be little doubt of its being, ere long, transplanted to the London boards."

I subjoin for your amusement another of my poetic effusions, remaining

My dear Frank,

Yours in sincerity,

SYLVATICUS.

EVENING IN PARADISE.

The beautiful enchantress, Evening, reigns
Mild sovereign of the hour, and her sweet spells
Of mist, and dew, and song, and fragrant scents
Exert their magic power. The weary sun
Just on the verge of those Assyrian hills,
Yields his dominion to her regency,
While in the deep he banquets. His last rays
Fall on the lofty gate of Paradise,
Illuming all its clustered rocks of gold,
Of carbuncle, and amethystine stone,
And every brilliant gem, till the radiant pile
Appears a mount of many-coloured fires ;
While the western sky a gorgeous mirror holds,
Reflecting all its glories, and the tints
Of winged shapes, and beautiful things of light,
And burning love, that hover o'er the porch,
And as they wave their plumage scatter round
Thick showers of ruby splendour, till the young earth,
Laughing aloud in joy, is canopied
By the pavilion of her God, and heaven
Commingles with her beauties !

But there is

Enclosed by that sun-blazing gate, a clime
Worthy the haunt of angel forms and gods ;
'Tis Eden in her twilight pomp of hues,
Odours, and flowers, surpassing all that since
In Yeman's happy vales and Cashmere's bowers,

On Enna's fields or famed Columbia's isles
Bloomed to the suns of summer. Blessed land !
Thy hills are clothed with cedar groves that prop
The purple fruit of the wealth-yielding vine,
Mingled with the carnation-blossomed web
Of th' ambitious floripondio, on each bough
Flinging its rainbow garland. Flowers, all hues,
Thy upland lawns enamel ; and thy slopes
Of mossy green descending to the streams
And founts outwelling with mosaic dyes
Profusely spread, where amber blossoms spring
Bright as the yellow sun-gleam, and the teeth
Of the young antelope, and fleet gazelle,
And skipping chamois gild with sheeny gold
As they the bright auriferous flowers crop.*
And here and there the baobab-tree lifts
In youthful pride, like a colossus huge,
His broad cloud-kissing boughs, in which her nest
The fond maternal pelican doth build ;
And on whose top the eagle waves her plumes,
And takes her farewell of the evening sun.

See, how those groves of that rich tree which scents
With its celestial-rosy bloom the heaven

* There is a herb on mount Lebanon, which is said to communicate a yellow golden hue to the teeth of the goats and other animals that graze upon it. " And there is a part of Candahar called Peria, or fairy-land, in some of those countries north of Tridia where vegetable gold is supposed to be produced."—*Thévenot*.

Of eastern Indra,* mixed with towering plants
 Of the beautiful japonica, o'erspread
 With their resplendent flowers of silver hue
 And vermeil tincture blended, gently bow
 Their heads in homage to gray-wimpled Eve,
 As, ushered by Favonian winds all balm,
 She passes through the garden with her urn
 Bestowing on each bud, and leaf, and bloom,
 Her baptism of sweet dews, pure as the drops
 She sprinkles on the rose-vales of Shiraz,†
 While all its sunset odours sighs abroad
 The sorrowful nyctanthes, grateful boon
 For her soft-falling shower; nor fails to put
 Its beauteous richness of floriferous buds
 Night-blowing ceres forth, that loves to woo
 With fragrance exquisite the kisses soft
 Of Dian's tender beams, but from the eye
 Of garish day closes its petals up,
 And scorns to let the sun-ray or the bee
 Drink from its nectar-cup.

And hark! the air
 Is full of sounds of melody and love;
 For Evening like a mighty conqueror comes,
 Her banners wave along the western sky,
 Cæsar's outgleaming in triumphal hour,

* The Cāmalaṭī, the Ipomœa of Linnaeus.

† Franklin says that "the dew is of such a pure nature in the climate of Shiraz, that if the brightest scimitar should be exposed to it all night, it would not receive the least rust."

And twice ten thousand voices herald her
 In music far resounding ! Yonder cast
 Their shade of leafiness the mango-groves
 On beds of th' azure-tinted campac flower,
 Which blooms not but in Eden's happy soil ;*
 And o'er them hover on bright golden wing
 The birds of Paradise, while in their boughs
 The warbling of celestial songsters ring,†
 Swelling the tuneful anthem. And there is
 A voice of harmony through all the woods,
 Where the green plantain and banana wave
 Their leaves of gold and crimson, as they catch
 The sunset gleams o' th' west, and giant palms
 Lift their broad heads like Indian-gilded domes
 Amid the burning glories of the sky.
 'Tis the deep voice of the great river-flood,
 That fountain of four mighty streams which flow
 Through many a distant realm :‡ from its dark bed
 Upgushing, to the sun it proudly flings
 A silver column of gigantic swell
 And lofty height, shining far off with light ;
 Then bowing, as in adoration, down
 Its foamy showers a thousand rainbows form,
 Whose many-coloured brightness gaily spans

* The Brahmins insist that the blue campac (or champaka) flowers only in Paradise.

† The goldfinch of Tonquin is called the celestial bird from its melodious singing : its plumage is superb when at rest, but loses all its beauty when it is on the wing.

‡ Genesis, c. ii. v. 10.

The jasper rocks, round which the lotus spreads
Its cherry-tinted blossoms.

Its fountain voice

Sweet sounding far away through the arcades
Of spicy forests, and the pillared aisles
Of fig-tree groves,—o'er-canoping rich banks
Of auriculas and bright anemones,
Smiling in all the light o' th' sun's last beams,
That dart in lines of glory through the shades,—
Awakes the nightingale of a hundred songs
And splendid plumage, which by Lapland brooks
Sings to her short-lived summer.* Other founts
Outwelled their streams beneath the tufted shade
Of the magnolia and proud tulip tree,
With whose magnificent blossoms all the winds
Their wings perfumed: the amber waters flowed
Delicious as the spring of Andra's isle,
Or that nectareous well, the drink of gods,
Of whose pure wave he that once quaffed, could zest
The richest wine no more.† Each flowery bed,
And knot of odorous herbs, and sunny bank,
Where the pine-apple grew and mangusteen,
Delicious fruit worthy the garden of God,
They visited, flowing o'er sheeny sands
And holding tuneful parley as they flowed

* The *Saddan Kiallainen*, (which signifies a hundred tongues), or Lapland nightingale, beautiful in its plumage and rich in its melody. This bird, called also *Enns*, haunts the sides of rivers.

† The *Fons Clitortus*.

With rocks of topaz and the beryl-stone,
 And with their music making beast, and bird,
 And humming insect glad ; for on their marge
 Fluttered the butterfly from flower to flower,
 On crimson, purple, and gold-spotted wing,
 Herself a flying flower ; and sweetly sung
 That bird, the smallest of the winged tribes,
 Hid in the bosom of the amrita flower
 That bears ambrosial fruit, who in her song
 Rivals the amorous nightingale's proud notes ;*
 While the Indian boija its bright volumes rolled,
 Studded with all the blazing gems that shed
 Their light t' th' sun, or gleam in caverns dark,
 On the green bank, and listened to her lay.

But the great flood amid the garden rolled
 O'er gems and sands that outshone the golden bay,†
 Making its wealthy waves like the skies, through which
 Star glows on star a galaxy of light ;
 And where the woods, by noonday orb unpierced,
 In all the pomp of mingled leaf, and flower,
 And blushing fruit, flung their dim solemn shades
 Across its barrier piles of amethyst,
 Turquoise, and diamond, down the waters rushed,
 Cascading headlong on from rock to rock,

* The Genambush, a bird not much bigger than a fly; and its notes are little inferior to the nightingale. It is a native of Brazil.—*Vide Scott.*

† The bay of Kieselarke, on the Caspian sea, "the sand whereof shines like fire."—*Struy.*

And in their fall there came a voice of power
From each bright silvery gush, chanting a hymn
Of wild melodious thunder. There the swan,
Fair river-queen, her pearly circles formed
And sung poetic lays : the garganey
His beauteous plumage shook, and gamboled free
The river-horse amid the tuneful reeds,
That made sweet music with the breath of flowers,
More softly plaintive than the trembling voice
Of Syrinx, when she fled Arcadian Pan.

And there were grottoes nigh, scooped from the rock*
Of Paphian diamond, and the living stone
Of emerald and sapphire, where those sounds,
After sweet pilgrimage, came on the ear
So sleep-inviting, that their echoes, lulled
Soothingly into drowsiness, could scarce
Lisp back the pleasing strains. These caves of love
Were circled with the honeysuckle-flower,
Lavish of blossomings, with jess'mine boughs
White-blowing of famed Saba's spicy vales ;
And crept far in their entrance Kishmee's vine,
Which, prodigal of its richness, formed a roof
Of arabesque-work with its clusters ripe
And scarlet-tinted foliage,—while the floor
Was with the golden grains of Ophir strewed.

* " On the side of a mountain near Paphos, there is a cavern which produces the most beautiful rock crystal. On account of its brilliancy, it has been called the Paphian diamond."—*Maselli*.

On, on the river flowed, till it outspread
Into a clear blue lake with islets pranked
Of lofty cypress, breadfruit-trees, and palms,
Almond and orange-groves. The bright expanse
Reflected like a mirror every tree,
With all its richly-clustered fruit and flowers,
And rose-o'ershadowed bower, and brilliant sky,
And cedar-tufted hill, and breezy knoll,
Crowned with a freshly-waving diadem
Of the broad-leaved Cobai-tree, whose fruit
Boasts a delicious flavour, and green banks
Crowded with rainbow blossoms on lofty stem,
Or studding like rich stars the mossy ground,
Till an inverted Eden met the view,
Pencilled in beauteous pomp.

Along those shores,
Where the gentle waters rose to kiss the flowers,
Those self-admiring children of the sun
That half way met their courtship, flocks were seen
White as the cloud-born snow on Zembla's hills,
Led by their lusty rams, with fleeces bright
Of curly gold and purple, richer far
Than that which Jason and his warriors bore
From th' enchanted shores of Cholchis; and there
played

On beds of damsviolets, in his pride
Of beautiful spots, with a sweet sportive lamb
The mountain leopard; there the fleet roe couched
Beside the brinded tigress with her young,

And the stern lordly lion bloodless slept
In friendship with the springbok and her fawns ;
There browsed the elephant and unicorn,
The unhunted elk, the buffalo, and gnu,
And roamed that powerful sultan of the beasts,
The mailed rhinoceros, with th' Arabian steed
And beauteous zebra, who tossed high their manes
And wantoned on the plain. Each isle and grove
A thousand birds of voice and plumage rare
Now tenanted, and spread their painted wings
On every bloomy spray, and swelled the hymn
A wild Hosanna to the setting sun !

And lo ! on those Elysian fields, where towers
The TREE of KNOWLEDGE ! awful plant of fate !
Aloft to the broad sky it widely spreads
Its voluptuous foliage, filled with roseate flowers,
And fruitage rich of gold, and tulip tints,
A banquet for the gods ! And near it stood
Mountant with all its music-breathing boughs,
Which now the silver-talking winds of eve
Delighted to disport with, while it seemed
To scorn the earth and seek to bloom above
In its own heaven, the ethereal TREE OF LIFE !
Its gorgeous blossomings and fruit divine
Glowed, as the topmost branches caught the last
Fond love-smile of the swift-departing sun,
Like those gem-bearing trees in th' magic bowers
Of the unearthly Genii.

Hark ! there steals

A low, rich, plaintive melody along
The waters' marge. It comes from the wind-shook
leaves

O' th' fatal TREE OF KNOWLEDGE ; and it seems
In its oraculous mysteriousness
To say, with sad prophetic tones of wo,
BEWARE O MAN OF ME ! MY FRUIT IS DEATH !

What forms are those that look so young and fair
In yon dim grove of odour-breathing trees,
Whose flowers the most delightful are that blow
In India's sun-beat clime ?* Are they of earth ?
Or regal-winged spirits of the clouds,
Paying bright visitation to the shades
Of God's own heaven-like garden ? No : they are
The first all-perfect pair of human kind
That earth e'er saw : whom bounteous Heaven hath
made

In beauty, wisdom, nobleness, and grace
A little lower than those angel shapes
That dwell in brighter homes of endless bliss.
What majesty lives in the sire of men !
His step is like the stately march of Jove,
His form Herculean, loftily sublime ;
His countenance the mingled beauty wears
Of Cypria-loved Adonis, and that fair

* The Nagasceara, one of the most delightful flowers, says Sir W. Jones, on earth.

Young shepherd-warrior who with Helen fled
The fatal shores of Greece ; and on his brow
Shine knowledge, dignity, and power of mind,
Goodness and innocence, unstained, unmarked
With shades of evil passion, pain, or care.
Spotless his form as blooming Absalom's ;
His strength like Sampson's seemed, and richly flowed
O'er his broad shoulders, like that mighty chief's,
In glossy curls his darkly-beauteous locks ;
While his keen eye, like Jove's own planet, flashed
The lightning of intelligence and love.

But who can paint those softer, sweeter charms
In which the mother of mankind appeared,
Leaning in tender fondness on her spouse ?
Not Raphael's silver foam-wreathed queen o' th' deep,
Wears dignity so lovely, nor such grace
Dwelt in Euphrosyné; the sweetest maid
Of the sweet graces ; not the virgin cheek
Of bright Aurora touched by Guido's skill,
Could rival the vermillion bloom which spread
O'er Eve's rose-blushing face ; nor Hebe looked
So beauteous in her smiles, when she the cup
Gave to the sovereign of the Olympian throne
Amid the admiring synod of the gods ;
Nor Venus, when she from the forest-boy
The apple won on Ida's woody top,
With such a radiancy of beauty shone !

Her eye was sweeter than that star of blue
Which rose o'er Eden's hill, and as it gazed
On Adam shot forth rays of innocent love,
Impassioned splendours from her inmost soul,
That sunk deep in his heart, and lighted there
The flames of mutual fondness and a bliss
Too exquisite for words, as sunbeams dart
Their influence through the deepest mine's dim caves,
And to the hidden gem its power impart
Of pure irradiancy.* Her polished brow
With crisped tresses shaded, that down flowed,
Voluptuous gold, to her unsandalled feet,
Illumed with spiritual feeling, looked more bright
Than the full moon in all her midnight pomp
Half veiled with golden clouds: and as she moved
In naked purity, all loveliness,
Her peerless beauty seemed made to command
The worship of the world; and O, for her
Society of bliss, Adam might e'en
Sighless the joys of Paradise forego!
Her voice was milder, sweeter than the tones
Of the twilight winds whispering to virgin flowers
Of Paradise their fondness; or the song
Unfrequent which comes o'er the ocean-tide

* "The unfruitful rock itself, impregn'd by thee,
In dark retirement forms the lucid stone.
The lively diamond drinks thy purest rays
Collected light, compact."—*Thompson*.

When mermaids to the rising moon-beam touch
 Their argus-tinted shells, and on the shrouds
 The ship-boy listens, silent with delight,
 And fear, and wonder : or the midnight strains,
 Heard from afar, of those famed nightingales
 That make rich harmony in Nippon's groves ;
 Or distant bugles' echo in the caves
 Of the star-lighted seas ; or Dian's sighs
 When she on Latmos' moon-illuminated heights
 Met her sweet shepherd-boy.

And see, they move,
 "The loveliest pair" that e'er on earth have met
 "In love's embraces," onward to their bower,
 Their bridal bower of joy. Delicious spot !
 Enclosed with groves of cinnamon, and nard,
 And spicy clove, and the sweet ekaya-tree
 Perfuming all the air of Paradise !
 Myrtle the roof, enwove with purple web
 Of th' immortal amaranth, its petals shone
 Like clustered amethyst, and on each side
 Geranium hues and bloom, and musky rose
 Yellow, and crimson, and damask, pranked with moss.
 And stole between each wealthy rose, that spread
 Its hundred ruby leaves 't' th' morning sun,
 Those gadding shrubs that deck the forest bowers,
 In all their beauty, of Columbian climes,
 With that mysterious passion-plant which here
 Unrivalled glowed with fruit, and buds, and flowers
 Of brilliant scarlet : and high overhead

Flourished the pomegranate with its double bloom,*
The aloe in its rich magnificence,
The beautiful magnolia, pride of Ind,
The rose-apple of Zambu, blossom crowned
And hung with fruitage of ambrosial zest.
And there the fragrant-scented gum-tree put
Its sweets floriferous forth, and thickly drooped
The coralline clusters with luxuriant grace
Of th' acacia boughs ; while the laburnum stood,
Like Danes, smiling through a shower of gold.

To this alcove of odours Eve now led
The happy Adam, and a banquet spread
Worthy of Paradise. Pure nectar flowed
In shells of rosy pearl ; pine-apples heaped
The verdant board ; the plantain, green and gold,
The breadfruit, guavas, dorians, mangusteens,
Berries and seeds of the sun, and purple grapes,
The amrita, and the passion-tree's rich fruit,
With all that India's sun-loved islands boast,
Or Europe's clime, or the western world displays.
Nor was there wanting music to the feast,
For star-crowned Dian o'er the eastern hills
Hastened, in all her pomp of shadowy light,
To wake her woodland minstrels, whose sweet tongues
In wild responses caroled a passionate hymn ;
And in the pauses of their anthem rose

* The Balantine.

The far-off chorus of the river-falls,
Sublimely swelling on the soft still air.
Then through the dim arcades of twilight groves,
Creatures that made the splendour of the moon
Pale with their brightness moved, and deathless shapes
Of winged glory, while from hill and dale
Came heavenly harpings : and although the lay
No child of earth could fathom, yet the tones,
The soft moonlighted tones of mystery, spoke
Melodious ecstasy to mortal ears !

LETTER CXVII.

L—— Cottage.

MY KIND FRIEND,

HAVING been lately a witness to the principal scenes of a strongly contested election at the town of —, scenes in which I know you never mingle,—I think some account of them will neither be unamusing or uninteresting.

Among other things which excited my attention, I could not but admire the supple condescension, the good-humoured suavity of manners, the kindness, the benevolent friendship shown to the middle classes of society,—and from them down to the very lowest grade, by the aristocratic candidate. What flattering congratulations, what brotherly salutations, with all the humility of supplication, issued from the lips of the dashing baronet and the younger scion of the ancient stock of nobility! What a cordial shaking of hands was there! What a mingling of the white and delicate fingers of a Master in Chancery, a Right Honourable, and a lofty General with the

smutty paws of the smoke-died blacksmith, the shoulder-o'-mutton fists of the drayman, the tarry and hearty gripe of the freespoken sailor, and the waxy claws of the meagre-looking cobbler! One of the very lowest of the pot-house throng, elate with joy that he had lived to see another day in his life which set him on a seeming equality with the rich and the great, would seize the arm of the Chancery Master, and swagger with him in proud triumph through the streets, looking eagerly round with a broad grin to see if he were observed by his fellow townsmen; while the man of law, inwardly writhing under the terrible degradation, was compelled to wear the irksome grimace of perpetual smiles, and call him his worthy brother-freeholder. Well, this is part of the heavy tax which power and greatness are obliged to pay for a little honour and flattering popularity!

Then at the period of an anxious canvass, what lengthy speeches were delivered from the balconies by day, and in the long rooms by night of their respective inns by opposing candidates! With what noble, what patriotic sentiments are those harangues replete! What studied clap-traps, as the actors term it, are introduced by their speakers, for the purpose of winning shouts

of applause and reiterated cheers ! These shoutings, which resound on every side, give a breathing time to the speaker ; while the clapping of hands is re-echoed by the mob without, who are as ignorant of the cause of their exultation as the rocks of the eagle's nest on the Lake of Killarney are of music, when they reverberate with a thousand voices a flourish of hunters' horns.

But the multitude are convinced of the noble patriotism of these orators, by a better assurance than that of empty speeches. Hogsheads of strong beer are sending forth their frothy streams in the square ; and by some means or other, possess a far more prevailing eloquence in their sounds, with that portion of the people at least, than the most studied declaimings of the candidates. Men and women, girls and boys, are running in all directions to obtain copious draughts of the patriotic beverage. What a shouting, roaring, laughing, contentious gang surround the waggons which contain the flowing beer-barrels ! They are more noisy, furious, and obstinate than the Jewish herd of swine, when, devil-possessed, they ran headlong over the cliffs into the sea ! Not less sweet to the electoral auditory within, flow the oily flattery from the honied tongue of the persuasive candidates,

"Thus far into the bowels of the town
Have they marched on without impediment."

But the rub is yet to come.—At length the important day of Nomination dawns on the crowded and bustling town. The streets and avenues leading to the Hall, where the grand national business is to be decided, are filled with the contending parties, distinguishable by their blue and purple colours. Yonder comes the Mayor in all his magisterial paraphernalia of maces, rods, furred robes of scarlet, and chains of gold, preceded and followed by his sergeants, lictors, train-bearers, and friends. The procession moves on in its ancient imposing pomp, and enters the Hall of Justice.

Now came the rush and roar of the first onset of a battle, destined to continue fifteen successive days. O, for the pen of a Homer to relate the deeds of pot-valiant heroes, who fought and bled, conquered and were routed alternately during the terrific struggle of these worthy patriots. No doubt, many acts of emprise, many single combats of renowned warriors, worthy to be recorded with a pen of iron on mountains of brass, were performed by each party, inspired,—not by the presence of warring gods, as Homer's

chiefs were wont to be on the plains of Troy,—but by the far more potent and invigorating influence of *Sir John Barleycorn*, enlisted in the service of the leaders and champions on both sides. Then shouting, cheering, hissing, groaning, struggling, ensign-seizing, flag-demolishing, battering, defending, entreating, threatening, expostulating, hawling, bawling, jeering, and scoffing commenced in all their glory; and the conflict, as each party strove to gain the first possession of the hall, was most furious, till the place, being small and incommodious, became crammed to suffocation on one of the hottest days in the latter part of July.

There were two grand opponents,—a General and a Member of the Law highly connected at court. The one could make long, flourishing, flattering speeches; which, following the example of other great men, he re-modified and improved by transposition, abridgment, and amplification before they appeared in print: while the old plain General, though he aspired,—cockered up, as Gray says, by a party,—and resolutely fought through thick and thin to obtain a seat in the British Senate, could not speechify at all, as he most ingenuously confessed to friends and foes.

Now followed, “thick as the stars that form

the galaxy," speech on speech, oration on oration by the leaders of each faction, the valorous General always excepted, who seemed to sit a quiet bearer and spectator of all the violent tirades, philippics, confusion, and turmoil of the day, leaving it entirely to his legal counsel and party, of which he appeared but the mere tool, to fight his battles; and it must be allowed that if words and blows, scurrility and violence could conquer, he had an almost certain prospect of victory.

Amidst tenfold groans, and yells, and cheers that "split the ears of the groundlings," vulgar fighting without and gentlemanly challenging within, even in the "common judgment-place," for now "these hot days is the mad blood stirring," a Poll was demanded by the General and his party. This opened a fresh and litigious contention, in which the General's two chief lawyers, Latitat and Brazenright, played the most conspicuous parts. Now it came pass,—to use an antiquated phrase,—that every elector who struggled up to the narrow dock of the hustings, to the great detriment of his wardrobe and often to the endangering of life itself, if he happened to be a Purple, being of the weakest party, was examined by the lawyers of one faction, and then

re-examined and cross-examined by those of the other, as to the legality of his vote and the right he had of appearing there for the purpose of exercising his franchise. This was an ample field for the display of legal quibbles:—host upon host of uncouth phrases, technical terms, and obsolete modes of speech were now drawn up in battle array, and a war of words and books was fought with the most desperate and determined resolution on both sides. You would have smiled to hear the little witticisms, the satirical jests, the hard rubs, the quaint gibes, the sarcasms of reproach, and the jeers of ridicule that were bandied from one to the other, and re-echoed and applauded with shouts of laughter by the excited mob. But the very patience of Job must have expired under the torture of being compelled, as I was, to listen through a hot summer's day in such a place to the inexhaustible arguments, the evasions, the shufflings, the verbose prolixity, the endless recapitulation, the detestable jargon, and the ridiculous verbiage in which the glorious uncertainty of the law allowed these sagacious and artful pleaders to indulge; the gist of whose arguments, unsifted from the technicalities of legal rubbish, are as Bassanio says of Gratiano's reasons, like "two grains of

wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them; and when you have them, they are not worth the search."

During this encounter of conflicting interests Mr. Brazenright seemed totally to forget every thing that was due to the respectability of his profession. In his vulgar and brutal eagerness to serve the cause of his patron, the General, without one single spark of the exquisite wit and fine humour of a Curran, or the smallest scintillation of that satirical brilliance which distinguishes a Canning, he stormed, and raved, and asseverated like a ferocious trooper sacking with naked sabre a conquered city; and when the Mayor, whose integrity and impartiality were unimpeachable, had occasion to give his decision as the returning officer against an illegal vote on the side of the General, he shook his huge and clumsy fists in the magistrate's face, accused him of rank perjury, and threatened to have him incarcerated in the cells of Newgate! This was a fresh incentive for a general uproar, and now were heard

"An hundred mouths, an hundred tongues,
An hundred pair of iron lungs."

Five candidates, "five thousand cryers,
With throats whose accent never tires.

The temple of eternal Fame,
When all her clarions sound the name
Of some great hero sung in story;
Ne'er heard so loud a din of glory."

Things continued in this delightful manner, with more or less of altercation and riot, till the Purple party, having by the most strenuous exertions got many friends up to the hustings, proposed to prolong the poll beyond the usual hour for its being closed. This was not to be quietly endured by the General's party. Cries of "Close the poll! Close the poll!" resounded from every part of the hall. On the other side, the Purples seemed determined to keep it open. At length numbers from without of the General's hired mob,—a gang of outlawed smugglers brought over from a neighbouring island, and well plied with rum and beer, pot-valiant, resolute, and ferocious,—poured into the "judgment-place" from doors and windows, knocking down and trampling beneath their feet those who attempted to oppose their progress towards the benches which held the candidates and their agents, amid deafening clamours and the crash of the constables' broken staves, who defended for a time the line of separation betwixt the populace and the candidates' attorneys, &c. Numerous

persons in one of the hottest days of July, were now wedged against the railing to the imminent hazard of their lives. The groans, the screams, the yells, and cries of murder were horrible to hear; and the effluvium of hydrogen so insufferable, that the hall presented the closest resemblance I believe ever witnessed in England to that terrific Black Hole, into which the tyrant of Calcutta thrust the unhappy British prisoners who fell into his power.

Soon, like the overwhelming surges that in a tempest cover with foam their own bleak and savage shores, the islanders and their determined leaders completely routed the vanguard line of constables and rushed in upon the benches, overturned the tables, broke the writing desks, trampled the papers under foot, tore the parish records, stopped the polling, drove the Mayor from the seat of justice, broke his staff of authority over his head, and—not content with that—absolutely broke his head also, by knocking him down against the iron palisades of a statue erected within the hall. Such outrageous and unconstitutional proceedings determined the injured party to call in military aid, for the purpose of keeping in awe the rum-inspired island-men and their violent ringleaders. They arrived the same

evening in all their costume of sworded pomp, and the next morning the hall was surrounded by a line of dragoons, who blockaded the avenues and kept off the crowd. The Mayor had in the discharge of his duty been so shamelessly reviled by Mr. Brazenright, that he had called in an Assessor to assist him, one well acquainted with the law, and to whom he gave up his seat of office. This gentleman, who stood firm to his post, came in for a more than common share of the most rancorous abuse from Brazenright, who often fastened on him with venomous tooth like a mad bull-dog, using the most ungentlemanly and scurrilous language; and he once went so far as to call him in open court "a d——d old beastly scoundrel." This will serve to show what kind of a character this advocate was.

At last,—after another day spent in argument, replication, and quarrelsome clamour, the clock struck four, and instantly sounded to arms the drum of the Blue General. The crowd began to thicken without, and the cry went through the hall, though comparatively thin, as usual, "Close the poll!" Had any one present ever heard the brazen-headed war-ram of the ancients battering down the gates of a beleaguered city, he would have imagined that such a terrible engine was

now at work at the back part of the hall, whose walls and doors shook at every thunder-blow, till the crazy old pile seemed ready to tumble on our heads, and bury us all in its dusty ruins. Another, and another furious stroke resounded through the hall, and the portals, which had been firmly barricaded with the design to prevent all ingress on that side, burst open or flew into a thousand splinters. In rushed pell-mell the shouting islanders with their leaders, and in a twinkling away flew the Purple candidates, the Mayor and Assessor, agents and voters, through the windows to the roof of the adjoining colonnade, or where they could find refuge; while the triumphant Blues waved their ribbon-bound hats from the hall, and shouted victory to their companions below, who cheered them with volleys of huzzas, and joined in their measureless laughter at the vain prancing and curvetting of the dragoons on their caparisoned steeds in all their parade of glittering sabres, long spurs, and brazen helmets.

And every day did these determined fellows, in spite of the military guard, though they galloped and flourished their drawn swords on every side, by stratagem and force close the poll when the General's fatal drum beat the warning signal.

On the day previous to the last was the grand struggle for entrance, for victory and glory. But at the wonted hour the Blue drum again sounded the death-dirge of the prolongation of the poll. The multitude mounted like bees on the backs of each other, and resolutely clambered up the timbers placed to prop the ancient walls of this hall of riot. In vain did the soldiers, many of whom were dismounted and placed on the roof of the corridor, knock them back with the ends of their pieces; still they clambered up and poured in at the windows. The magistrate under whose controul the military had been placed, a violent partizan of the Purples, now ordered them to prepare to fire on the populace. Already their carbines were fixed to their shoulders, and they waited but for the last signal to begin a horrid scene of carnage. The screams and piteous cries of the women,—some flying here and there for safety, others dragging in gasping terror their husbands and sons from the scene of expected slaughter,—and the deadly pale and ferocious looks of the men as they eyed the soldiers with a revengeful defiance and calmly awaited the pealing death-shot, formed a fearful picture worthy the study of a Fuseli, or the horror-stirring skill of Vasari, who painted the perfidious and

infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew. Fortunately at this critical moment, the Colonel of the regiment rushed out from the hall, and by commanding his men not to fire, stilled the awful commotion.

On the last day of this memorable struggle for the enviable rights of the British Constitution, the Blue party remained conquerors of the field. But it will be readily admitted by every impartial observer, that they obtained their triumph by physical force and lawless violence. A triumphal car, gaudily decorated with flags and flowers accompanied with music and the roll of that drum so ominous to the Purples, was now brought to the hall; and the General, descending from the bench where he had been gently stewing from eight o'clock in the morning till four at noon, exposed himself in it to an hour's roasting, bare-headed, before the torrid beams of an August sun! while the populace in his interest

“ All lift their well-approving hands on high,
And rend with peals of loud applause the sky.”

As the drunken mob bore him about from one street to another, the General seemed as vain and as proud of his lofty seat as Ataliba, when he sat on his rafters of massy gold resting on the

shoulders of his feathered warrior-chiefs in full march to meet the treacherous and bloody-minded Pizarro.

The General is not likely, even by his own confession, to rival Demosthenes by his rhetorical thunder, or divide with Cicero an imperishable fame by his persuasive eloquence in the British Parliament: yet no doubt he considers it, and very justly so, sufficient glory and reward for all he endured and paid, to have won the hard-fought battle, to sit down with that honourable assembly, and have M. P. affixed may be for seven long years to his name. I shall conclude with our immortal Bard:—

“ Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not derived corruptly ! that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer !
How many then should cover that stand bare !
How many be commanded that command !
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
From the true seed of honour ! how much honour
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new varnished ! ”

Adieu !

Yours,

SYLVATICUS.

LETTER CXVIII.

L—— Cottage.

MY WORTHY FRIEND,

AFTER considerable research and many wanderings over the uncultivated downs and wild heaths of D——shire, I have much pleasure in informing you that I have undoubted reasons to believe that I have at length found, of all its numerous and valued reliques of antiquity, that spot which must ever be considered as claiming the highest interest in the bosom of him who reveres as sacred the remains of ages and nations no longer in existence. This once-venerated and holy spot is no less than the INAUGURATION-PLACE of the ancient Celtic kings of my native county. This, I am sure you will say, is a discovery of great price, and amply repays every labour in the search. True: but I do not think there are ten persons in the county, who would not consider the trouble of stepping over ten straws to gain a view of it as unprofitable labour.*

* An announcement that this discovery had been made appeared in one of the county papers, but excited no notice or interest that I ever heard of. I have inserted this letter principally with a view to record the fact; that others, who have a taste for the antiquities of Britain, might learn that there still exists such a place, as yet unmarred by any modern Goth.

This *sanctum sanctorum* of former days, is surrounded with a gently rising vallum and fossatum, forming a perfect parallelogram, with an easy sloping fosseway ascent leading up to the entrance on the centre of one of its sides directly fronting the south. In the middle of the platform is the circular hollow, where was erected the ancient Pillar of Stone by which the king stood, and on which he afterwards sat when the trumpets proclaimed his elective coronation. On the inside of the eastern bank near the angle is the circular pit, finely formed, into which, according to the author of *Munimenta Antiqua*, was poured the blood of the victims sacrificed on these solemn occasions. The whole is in a state of the most perfect preservation, except unfortunately that the regal stone has been removed, and, without doubt, broken up to mend some neighbouring road.

Exactly facing the entrance at some distance on the plain, is an elliptical circle, forming a low raised mound of considerable dimensions; and to the right, about a mile from this place of public assemblies, on an elevated position are the rampart-walls of a large city. A British covered-way passes very near, leading up to a hill on the left, covered with British works of a singular and curious construction; and a green trackway

branches off from this road near the top of the hill, pointing toward the northern gates of the city, while near it are several fine tumuli.

The shades of evening had overtaken me long before I could tear myself away from this once-sanctified spot, and the moon slowly broke from the eastern clouds over another more distant hill-city of the warlike Celtæ, where seldom wanders the foot of man. Not the distant form of even a shepherd returning from the fold, was to be seen on the lonely plain; not the faintest sound disturbed the solemn and profound silence of the shadowy solitude! Ah, thought I, the time has been, when this peopled plain resounded with the shoutings of the multitude, as on the stone which once stood within that blood-sprinkled enclosure sat enthroned the kings of the DURETRIGIANS:—a stone once held as sacred as that of Scone, the palladium of Scotland, and on which are still seated at their coronations the kings of England, beneath the lofty and ponderous arches of the venerable aisles of Westminster Cathedral. But in the times of old, in the days of ancient generations, these ceremonies were performed in the open air, like those which accompanied the election of Saul when “all the people shouted and said, God save the King.”

What crowds of warriors with their brazen spears, their grass-woven robes, and shields of gleaming metal have been gathered together around this place to choose their princely leader, on whose brows the fragrant oil* was poured out, —a custom of the most early ages,—by the chief druid, who led him to the regal stone, to his seat of delegated power; while all the principal warriors knelt around him, and spread their richest robes and brightest bucklers at his feet.† The trumpets and harps of the bards sounded forth a joyous peal, and the chariot drums thundered in concert with the voices of the multitudes as they shouted and cried, "The gods protect the king! May the god of the skies, great Belenus, gild his path with eternal brightness, and the queen of the firmament light his steps from the chase of the wild deer! May Tamaris thunder on our foes from his shield, and fling his hottest lightning from the point of his spear to blast all our enemies!"

Then flowed the blood of the victims into yonder sacred pit, from which a portion was taken to be sprinkled by the druids on king and people,

* "Gratianus Lucius," says O'Halloran, "mentions the use of oil at the inaugurations of the ancient Irish kings."

† See Fordun's account of an ancient Scottish coronation.

as the smoke of the burnt-offerings ascended up on high. And now followed the ancient manly games of the Britons. On yonder circular and elevated mound, which confronted the regal seat, the brave youth assembled. The king, as they stood above the surrounding crowds on the green amphitheatre, could behold their noble feats from his banner-encircled throne; and to the athletic victors he adjudged the prize of renown, crowned with the universal applause of his delighted nation. On yonder hilly terraces, the charioteers performed their races and warlike exercises. Their evolutions and surprising skill in the management of their steeds, ascending and descending the steepest banks with the swiftest velocity, and their mimic combats as they ran along the shafts of the battle-cars rushing in full speed against each other, won the heart-yielded acclamations of a mighty people, who delighted in scenes of mortal strife* and received the honourable meed due to such martial accomplishments.

* Ancient authors write of the Britons, says Aylett Sammes, "That every one delighted in picking quarrels; that it was their daily exercise and pleasure to be skirmishing; that they were continually going out in parties, fortifying and intrenching, many times rather out of delight than any necessity." This well accords with the numerous camps or hill-cities which are still existing of this warlike people, in so many parts of the island.

The ceremonies ended, the king of the Durotrigians, followed by his train and borne on a broad shield by his stoutest warriors, entered the gates of the western city between files of grinning skulls and ghastly heads of those enemies they had destroyed in battle, and which they set up on polls at the entrance as gloried trophies of their exploits in the fields of Hesus.* Thou, O lovely moon, didst at that hour arise in all thy clouded majesty, even as now thou sweetly unveilest thy "peerless light!" and bathed in thy brightness, the chariots and their drivers chanting the war-song of the bards returned from their sports in long and bickering line; while their powerful dogs, that always followed them to battle and fought by their side, leaped in joy around the rattling wheels, and awoke the mountain echoes with their hoarse baying.

Ah! still looks forth the moon from her dwelling on high, but she beholds them no more!

* The British warriors preserved the bones of their enemies whom they slew: and Strabo says of the Gauls, (who were as he informs us far less uncivilised than the Britons, but still nearly resembled them in their manners and customs) that when they return from the field of battle, they bring with them the heads of their enemies fastened to the necks of their horses, and afterwards place them before the gates of their cities. Many of them, after being anointed with pitch or turpentine, they preserve in baskets or chests, and ostentatiously show them to strangers as a proof of their valour; not suffering them to be redeemed, even though offered for them their weight in gold. This account is also confirmed by Diodorus.

They are all passed from hence as the shadow of a cloud that dims her radiance; the wind pursueth it, and it fleeth away for ever! The worship of Dian is gone; no one bows in homage at her appearance: she looks down on the city of the hill, she casts her bright eye over the plain, and all is solitude and stillness! Beautiful moon, of what changes on earth hast thou been the silent witness!

TO THE MOON.

"The conscious moon through every distant age
Has held a lamp to wisdom."

BEAUTIFUL star! thou lightest up all heaven
With thy full-fooding glory, as of old;
Thy constant watch of ages keeping still,
And gazing kindly on the drowsy world,
Like a fond mother on her slumbering babe,
With smiles of brightness, as when first thou walk'st
In thy new splendour through the starry depths
Of unknown space, and the young globe didst view
In all its virgin pomp of spicy woods,
Mountains, and flowery plains, and rosy bowers,
And silver-sheeted waves of sea and lake,
When all was desolate silence; when nor man,
Nor bird, nor beast was there to gaze i' thy light,
Wondering upon their shadows. Thou art still

Young in thy lovely radiantness, although
A thousand ages with their changing scenes
And generations all have past away
T' oblivion's deepest gulphs. Sweet queen of night,
Who, though inconstant yet most constant art,
And though still changing ever still the same;
O, wouldst thou tell me what thy prying beams
Have looked upon since thy pale spotted orb
Caught the first sunbeam from the fount of day,
How would I listen to thy wondrous tale,
Like young Endymion when thy Dian sought
With love-tuned voice his cave at midnight hour,
And chide th' intruding morning when she came,
Surprised to find thee in the midday still.

O, thou hast looked on Eden's beauteous land
In all its bright magnificence of flowers;
And viewed thine image in its amber floods,
Whose sands of gold and gems thy living light
With lavish rivalry of splendour mocked:
And thou didst minister thy richest beams
To Adam on his bridal eve of love,
When to his bower of amaranth and rose
Thou light'st him, smiling on his angel spouse
Like a young god! while through the shadowy woods,
Wealthy in odours and ambrosial bloom,
Celestial harps rang with the nuptial hymn,
And all in that delicious clime was moved
With the sweet spirit of love. Ah, ne'er again

Shall thy revolving orb on earth behold
A night so full of beauty, pomp, and bliss !
And thou thy pitying beam didst on the heads
Shed of that wretched pair,—the happiest once
E'er dwelt in worldly bower,—as by the grave,
The first-made blood-grave of their murdered son,
Murdered by his fell ruffian brother, they
Knelt bathing it with tears of agony !
Thou hast arisen at eventide, and viewed
The mighty giants of the guilty world
Before the flood, still busy at their toil
In piling rock on rock, their pyramids
To lift amid the skies !* And thou hast broke
In brightness from the tempest cloud, and seen
Thy sister star one vast and boundless sea,
A wild and desolate ocean, without shore,
Or rock, or cliff, or isle ; its dark dull surge
Rolling o'er all the nations of the earth
And their proud works, ten thousand fathoms deep !
While a dark speck far off appeared the ark,
Like its own dove without a place of rest,
In the rich golden halo of thy light
Flung on the quivering waters, its full womb
Bearing the kernel of another world.
Thou, too, hast from thy watch-tower in the skies
Gazed on the thick-ribbed walls of Babylon
In all its glory, as her turrets high

* See Gabb on the Pyramids.

Bathed their proud-soaring summits in thy light ;
 While through her streets of palaces, that stretched
 Full many a mile, their thronging multitudes,
 As to and fro like summer ants they passed
 Lifting their hands to thee in homage, hail'd
 Thy worshipped beauty, which the temple-pile
 Of tower on tower upreared,—where Belus stood
 The gold-wrought idol of a thousand realms—*,
 Enshrined in living splendours ! And thy beams
 Her hanging gardens have looked in upon,
 And shed their lustre round the warlike queen†
 Of that imperial city, as at eve
 She wandered through her mountain paradise,
 And banqueted amid its roseate bowers
 And sweet romantic shades in regal pomp ;
 Where fountains flung their music-breathing streams,
 And trees put forth their blossomings and fruits
 Amid the moonlight clouds : while far below
 The city with its walls, and towers, and squares,
 Streets, palaces, and gay and busy crowds
 Lay a vast panoramic scene of pomp
 Outstretched, immense, in thy resplendent light,
 A mingled mass, half shade, half bright magnificence !

Past a few ages, and when thou lookedst forth
 From thy cloud-wreathed pavilion on the plains

* "And I will punish Bel in Babylon,—and the nations shall not flow
 together any more unto him."—Jeremiah, c. li. v. 44.

† Semiramis.

Of far-famed Shinah,—all was past away !
Temple and turret, gardens, walls, and towers
In one promiscuous heap of ruins sunk ;
As though an earthquake had gone by and shook
This wonder of a wondrous world to dust !
Where kings endiadem'd at banquet sat
As gods adored, thy trembling radiance fell
On Desolation's dark and ghastly fiend !
People and princes, wisemen, counsellors,
And warriors, all were fled :—no voice was heard
Save the fierce lion's in the hall of kings,
And the grim wolf howling to thee for food !
Thy worshippers were into darkness gone ;
No more the astrologer bowed to thy beams,
Nor counted from his tower thy starry train ;
No more in triumph past the warrior-king
Through those time-mouldered gates, mid shouting hosts
And troops of weeping captives ! Silence dwells
With solitude for ever there, save when
The pilgrim wanders o'er its grass-grown mounds,
And sighs amid the fragments of its pomp !

And thou hast shone on lovers fair and young
In their full prime of beauty, who have been,
Like Babel's splendour, e'en for ages—dust !
But o'er whose tale the harp of bard hath shed
A consecrated and undying fame.
How beautiful looked Helen in thy beams,
As on the vessel's deck she stood and gazed

Towards Sparta's shores, encircled by the arm
Of her love-smiling shepherd-corsair boy,
When she by night embarked and with him fled,
The blooming ravisher, to Ilion's towers !*
O, who can tell how beautiful she looked,
When wildest passion lit her star-like eye,
And joy and shame, remorse and lawless love
Glowed in alternate blushes on her cheek,
As change the sun-died clouds of summer's morn,
And crimsoned o'er her rich ripe ruby lip,
That half unfolded like the opening rose
To his impassioned kisses of desire,
Whilst thou upon that lovely pair didst smile,
And the land breezes wake to waft them on
O'er tideless seas of Greece, the gentle waves
In silver sheeting with thy brightest beams.
And often didst thou lend thy friendly light
To guide Leander o'er the briny surge
Of Hellespont, and show to him the form,
Th' angelic form of Hero as she leant
From her high lattice, watching to behold
Her far-famed hero buffet with the waves.

* "The expedition of Paris was a marauding exploit, that frequently occurred amid the rude, licentious manners of the times; and most probably arose, as Herodotus imagines, in retaliation for similar injuries committed by the Greeks. The ambitious Agamemnon had been long eager to seize the first opportunity that offered to so powerful a league; he therefore gladly entered into his brother's quarrel, and making the wrongs of Menelaus a cloak for his designs, looked forward with anxious hope towards the plunder of the richer provinces of Asia Minor."

Thou didst behold the first frail bark which storms
Had driven t' th' mid-Atlantic, when its crew
Lifted to thee their praying eyes and sighed
For their dear native homes, for those they loved
Left in th' old world ; who till they died believed
The winds had sunk them to the deep sea-gulphs,
A prey t' th' ocean serpent and fierce shark.
On those bold mariners fell thy cheering beams,
When first they landed on the unknown shores
Of those thrice-happy islands in the west ;
And lighted the first hunters through the depths
Of mighty forests, where the foot of man
Had never trod before !

Oft hast thou gazed
On that famed city, empress of the south,
Renowned Rome, as on her seven proud thrones*
In majesty she sat to rule the world !
When twice a thousand temples stood within
The vast circumference of her rampart towers,
And to her senate kings and nations flocked
From distant corners of the earth for law
And justice : when rolled through her hundred gates
The golden chariots of her victor chiefs,
As in procession passed the gorgeous spoils
Of vanquished potentates, from where the sun
First smote the Parthian hills to utmost Thule ;

* The seven hills on which Rome stood.

When from the marble theatres arose
The thunder shouts of her applauding sons
To thy cloud-tabernacle, and her lords
Revelled in measureless excess of pomp !
And thou didst her behold when through her streets,
That fatal night of carnage, fire, and blood,
The GOTH with all his savage warriors rushed ;
And yells, and death-screams rang from tower to tower,
And massacre and rape, begrimed with gore,
Roamed through her palaces and pictured halls !
When down rushed temple, dome, and battlement,
Turret, and portal-arch, and rampart high
With one wide ruinous crash, and flames and smoke
Shut from thy view the cloud-encompassed wreck
Whence rose to Heaven one long and dreadful cry.
But there was none to save ! All heaven rejoiced
To hear the city's fall :—for she had oft
Quaffed from her golden cup the martyr's blood,
And with the life-stream of the saints been drunk !

And oft hast thou, resplendent queen of floods,
What time the sweet Sicilian bowers put forth
Their rosy blossomings, and her full song,
Pleased with thy presence, poured the nightingale
Mid the pomegranate's bloom, beheld the maids
And shepherds bend in adoration down
Before thy silver throne, and worship thee
With hymns of praise ; which through the myrtle-
groves

Of Enna floating, shamed the bird of night
With their rich melody ; and offerings heap
Of flowers and smoking incense at thy shrine,
As half-enveiled in crimson and purple buds,
Breast-high they knelt, and hailed thee queen of
heaven !

And still dost thou, prime of the starry host,
Some relics of thy worship yet behold
Amid the cinnamon woods and palm-tree shades
Of Isles remote on Ocean's eastern verge ;
Where the Indian hunter at thy rising bows,
And the wild forest-maid, when fountains gush
In silvery tumult through the mango-bowers,
And twilight music sing o' th' spicy air,
A soft sweet lay of mystery awakes
To thee, as westward in thy golden path
Thou journey'st on through heaven's unfathomed
depths,
A goddess in eternal beauty clad.

Thou, too, hast viewed on Lapland's dreary coast
The haggard sisters of enchantment meet,
Muttering foul spells beneath thy latest rays ;
While spirits of earth, and air, and ocean wait
Upon their bidding, and the winds bind down
To their mysterious power, and tempest charms,
That hurl the Alpine billows to the clouds
In the dire fury of their potency,
Unite to form ; till at their hellish rites

Thou hast turned pale, and hid thy sickening light
Amid the pearly caverns of the deep !

Oft has thy beam huge Carnac's druid rocks,
And those high altars of oblation, raised
Near the anointed pillars and " the stone of power"
On Ambri's plains, smote tremblingly, as bowed
The line of priests mid the gray-stone avenue,—
Where the tall shadows of the columns fell
Dim, mystical,—to thy uprising orb ;
And the foul sacrifice of captive slain
On the high-place of blood, flame-blackened, lay
An offering to the Sun, and upward still
A faint, pale smoke cast on the tainted air :
Then woke the bardic harps with anthems sweet
To thee, Diana, huntress of the woods*

* Diana, or the Moon, Pausanias says, lib. 8, was worshipped by the Britons and Gauls. "That Diana was worshipt in Britain is very certain; an image of hers, anno 1603, was dug out of the ground in Monmouthshire. Her name I will mention, ARDURENA and ARDORENA, being the same in the Gaulish as *Nemorensis* in the Latin tongue; namely, Diana of the woods or mountains: for we may suppose DEN to have signified in the ancient British tongue a wood, or mountain, (as *Den* forest in England); and not ARDEN, as Mr. Camden would have it; for AR signifies open in the British tongue, so that ARDEN is open a wood; for although there be a great wood in France called *Arden*, yet it is not unlikely but it might first have been called *Den*, and the provinces lying on it *Arden*, and afterwards the wood itself..... But to return to Diana; the Britains, no doubt, were great admirers of her, for their habitations were most in the woods,—hunting their chiefest recreation, having most excellent dogs for that purpose, as Strabo witnesseth; and Mr. Camden takes notice, that dogs called *Agætes* by the Greeks, and so much praised and esteemed by them, were of the British race, and to this day are called by us *Cashounds*," —*Aylett Sammes' Britanniæ Antiqua Illustrat.*

And vestal queen of night, who with thy nymphs
The British forests roamed : while upward gazed
The druid, by the oracular stone of fate,
On the blue star-thronged heavens, and mysteries read
In that vast volume which the ebon hand
Of Night had open flung to his glad eye,
That ne'er to vulgar ear might be revealed.
Ah ! now thy nightly beam finds nothing there
But loneliness and silence !

Blessed moon !

How sweet it were to hear thy ancient tales,
Hadst thou a voice, of scenes and ages past,
Of all which thou hast witnessed : sweeter still
To journey round our globe, and gaze with thee
Upon its thousand wonders !—To behold
Th' Elysian fields and forests of Ceylon
Lie like a dreaming beauty in thy light,
Where the dire monstrous serpent hissing gilds
With thy resplendency his hundred folds :
Or with thee follow the eternal sun
In the same heaven sweet-shining with thyself
Round the arctic summer pole, and overlook
The snow-clad mountain-tops, whose ridges gleam
With vivid gold, belting the deep-blue sky
With rainbow circles ; and thence view below
The iceberg citadels, and castle towers,
And gothic fanes magnificently smote
By the wizard sunbeams into glittering piles
Of richest silver, with bright spire, and dome,

Niche, fretwork canopy, and battlement,
Blazing like fairy halls with radiant gems !

Would I might visit gliding on thy beam
Libya, land of the slave,—her far-off shores,
Her wondrous forests, cities, and her clime
Of Bambouk, whose enchanted hills are gold,
Whose miser rivers roll their sparkling waves
Rich with that dear-loved ore, where ne'er may come
The hated white-man ! Would I might explore
Those sacred woods, where from their sources spring
The sea-broad floods of that vast world unknown,
And watch thy light, as on the fountain marge,
Blooming with lotus flowers, it sleeps serene
By man's unhallowed footstep unapproached ;
There view the spotted giraffe drink his fill,
And troops of beauteous antelopes play round
The mossy banks beneath the tamarind tree,
The feathery palm, and rich banana's shade ;
Mark the wild gambols of the pangolin,
The fleet gazelle, and mid the whispering reeds
The river-horse, while sober elephants
Feed on the fragrant flowers of the rota boughs ;
Hear the fond lullaby of murmuring dove
Amid the incense trees to her unfledged brood,
And Poula shepherds' song and rustic pipe
Far off amid the boundless forest shades,
With the jackalls' voice baying at thy bright orb,
And drum and tuneful reed of negro maids

With youth and manhood mingled in the dance
Beneath their mango-groves.

Then would I mount
And with thee visit ocean's dread abyss,
And sit upon the rocks that tower amid
The Maelstrom's horrid gulph; while far around
Full many a league the dreadful whirlpool swells
With boiling, foaming, thundering, deafening rage,
As if the elements all in strife had met!
There the shipwreck demon, clad in tempest clouds,
Dwells mid the dark and terrible mountain surge,
Waiting in the full plenitude of power
For his seafaring victims, with vast jaws
That would a navy in its battle pride
Devour as a poor morsel, and then howl
With maniac fury for fresh prey to gorge!
Away, away, then on thy darting beams
Would I spring upward, and with them alight
On the huge Himalayan steeps that soar
Above the highest mountains on the globe,
And view the morn her ruby portals ope,
As the young sun his burning chariot mounts
And scatters glory o'er the myriad isles
Of the eastern sea, and those vast hills and plains
Where Turan* stretches towards the frozen pole,—

* Eastern name of Tartary.

But ah, it may not be ! Farewell, sweet moon !
All-seeing eye of night ! I cannot be
A voyager with thee round thy sister star !—
Yet soon the time will come when I shall soar
Far, far beyond thy sphere, and visit worlds
Strange and mysterious,—wonderful, sublime,
Which thy remotest beams have never reached ;
And where thy pale and feeble light would die
Like fireflies in Aurora's Indian bowers,
When the rejoicing sun awakes and fills
The blue skies with refulgence ! -

LETTER CXIX.

L—— Cottage.

DEAR FRANK,

I HAVE been absent from home for a longer period than is usual with me, at least for some years past; or you would have heard from me early in January. Having no literary engagement, about six months ago I set off once more for London, in the hope of obtaining either temporary or permanent employment among the publishers, and getting my Tragedy, which had succeeded so well at W——, brought out this season at one of the Theatres in the metropolis.

Shortly after my arrival, I called on Mr. C——, M. P. residing in Hanover Square, who had kindly promised when in the country to put my play in its improved state into the hands of the new American Manager; when I found that he had left it behind him in D——shire, but that it was expected shortly by water with other things, and he assured me that immediately on its arrival he would lay it before the committee of Drury-Lane. A few nights after this, I witnessed Miss Har-

grave's second appearance at Covent-Garden. Her performance was pleasing and graceful, and she made the most of a part (Lady Constance in *King John*) neither chosen by herself for a *débüt*, nor calculated in any way to display advantageously her histrionic powers, which, when fairly developed, are of no common order. She obtained great applause, unmarked by one dissentient voice. The scenes and dresses were charmingly classical, and strictly consonant to the era of that historical play. Could Shakspeare rise from the tomb and behold the magnificence of the processions and scenery, the correctness and splendour of costume with which his pieces are now got up on the London boards, when compared with the rude, uncouth proscenium and paraphernalia of the play-houses, or rather booths, many of them open to the sky, in his time, when plays were often performed by the light of the sun, astonishment and rapture would surely overcome him: he must fancy himself and works transported into the regions of fairy-land, and all his own delightful imaginings of enchantment and witchery fully realized.

Passing one day through Chancery Street, I had the curiosity to look in at the shop-door of my old lodgings, where I staid on my first visit to

London. Good heavens! the old grocer is still alive, and at his post behind the counter where I left him, though he then seemed aged. He had no recollection, I perceived, of me. How should he? What changing scenes, what trying situations have I gone through since last I passed the threshold of his door! while he has been as stationary as the scales fastened to the beam above his head, or the brass shilling nailed to his counter. Still am I unprovided for, and as much the creature of uncertainty and disappointment as on the first hour I entered his house!

During my stay in London, I received through a friend at whose house I remained several weeks, an admission-ticket to the reading-rooms of the British Museum, which I visited at every opportunity. But no portion of that interesting collection of so much which is valuable, beautiful, surprising, and sublime in nature and art, interested me more than the statue gallery and the Elgin marbles. How delightful to contemplate those remains of ancient sculptors! to reflect that the chisel of a Phidias and an Alcamenæ might have given grace and symmetry to many of those inimitable shapes;—a Phidias, whose immortal works adorned the Parthenon, the glory of renowned Athens, and whose unrivalled skill

could produce the Olympian Jupiter, sixty feet in height, adorned with more than human grandeur and majesty,—claiming by its incomparable merits the eternal gratitude of the Eleans. Nor less worthy of wonder and admiration are the divine labours of Praxiteles, who executed in Pentelician marble the colossal statue of Juno at Plataeæ on the banks of the Asopus.

To return to myself. After a certain period, I again called on Mr. C., and found, to my great disappointment, that the management of Drury-Lane, without assigning any reason for their refusal, had again declined to give my Tragedy a trial on the boards of that house. I now determined to offer it to Mr. Davidge, the manager of the Royal Cobourg Theatre: he received it with pleasure, and promised me it should have a careful reading. I found him a gentlemanly, pleasing personage, wholly divested of that disgusting pomposity which the generality of managerial chiefs so often assume. When I saw him the second time, I found his opinion highly favourable of the piece, and he pledged me his word that it should be brought out at the Cobourg about June. Thus, then, after all my dramatic labours from my boyhood; after all my yearnings, strivings, and endeavours, crowned with so

many years of disappointments, I have at last obtained the promise that a play of mine shall appear to receive the judgment,—against which there lies no appeal,—of a London audience! I have every reason, Frank, to expect and believe that this promise will be faithfully observed: but as to pecuniary advantages to an author at this theatre, I imagine they are quite out of the question.

Shortly after this I quitted London, having succeeded in nothing besides, and returned to my distant home, (for where else could I turn my weary steps) without any literary employment, and as hopeless, destitute, and heart-broken as heretofore! Yet why repeat a tale so often told: it is ungenerous to harrow the feelings of those who have it not in their power to offer consolation and relief. But though thus tossed, my friend, on the storm-beat and agitated ocean of life, there is yet left me this consoling, soothing certainty,—that every swelling wave of trouble, every mountain surge of calamity is but carrying me onward with the greater force and rapidity to that safe and peaceful haven, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest.

I send you the following poem, written for the second edition of *Death's Doings*, but which was received too late for insertion in that work,

Remaining ever,

Yours in sincerity,

SYLVATICUS.

DEATH AND THE POET.

AND art thou vanished, son of bardic fame,
Like meteor splendours on the midnight heath,
From Earth's dull sphere, where the sun-glances shine
So transiently 'twixt tempests wild of woe?
Has the pale King of Terrors then put out
The proud flame of thy genius, quenched thy light
That gave to every scene on which it shone,
Sublime or sportive, beautiful or wild,
Elysian or Plutonic, tenfold charms?
Like the rich moonbeams pillowed on the floods,
And slumbering on the dewy rose-showered banks
Around the shadowy woods of Eden's clime.
And has the dark cold silence of the grave
Fallen on thy harp, that rang with love's sweet dreams,
And told how beautiful young beauty looked,

When gazing on night's radiant orb the sigh
 Of passionate fondness stole from parted lips
 Outglowing the fresh rose-bud ? or with lays
 Heroic sounded, and with trumpet peal
 Awoke the hurly of the battle field,
 Where steel-girt warriors rushed in bannered lines
 On to the death-strife, and gold-acceptred kings
 Became at evening hour the eagle's food ?
 Or, fired with seraph themes sublime, poured forth
 The minstrelsey of heaven to mortal ears,
 Revealing those high mysteries of a world,
 From all but inspiration's eagle glance
 For ever veiled, who in her dreamings rapt,—
 The bright enthusiast,—starward gazing wins
 A beatific glimpse ? And is, sweet bard,
 Thy daring spirit fled ? thy fancy lost,
 That once with such ecstatic visions burned ?
 All gone ? all faded ? like the enchanted isles *
 So beautiful, sunlighted, and serene,
 Which in the Atlantic deep have oft, 'tis said,

* The Fata Morgana—first observed by some Danish and Irish fishermen about Anno Domini 900, and from that period to the fourteenth century frequently seen by the Anglo-Saxon and French fishermen and mariners at sea. Similar meteorological phenomena have been also seen at Ramsgate, and by Father Angelucci on the coast of Sicily. Query, Instead of the beautiful Atlantis of Plato being, according to M. Bailly's theory, either Greenland, Spitzbergen, or Nova Zembla, might it not have been one of these ocean *Mirages*, as the French term them, disappearing from the sight on a near approach, instead of being sunk by a convulsion of nature in the Atlantic Ocean?—Vide *Iceland Ann Ortelius in Treasure Geo.*, an ancient Saxon Poem.

By mariners been seen; where shore, and cliff,
And tufted orange-bower, and flowery mead,
And forests with arcades of blooming trees,
And palm-crowned cape, and airy castle piled
Amid the rainbow clouds, with scattered flocks
And smoke-ascending cot in breezy shade,
Gladdened the weary sea-boy with the hope
Of harbour and delectable repose,
After long storms and toil, till vanished all,
At evening, into nothingness the dim
And fairy dream of ocean!—Well-a-day!
And must poetic Genius too expire?
Is there no ransom from the dreary grave
For Nature's noblest gifts? No: with the clown,
The veriest shallow-pated loon that tills
The soil for bread, and the base miser who
Hath but one hope, one thought, and they for gold,
The bitter root of Evil's baneful tree,
Must Genius, filled with bright imaginings,
And glorious fires, and energies, and thoughts
That make him more than mortal, sink in death,
And dwell amid the vileness of the tomb,
As from the rosy skies and cloud-wrought pomps
That wait upon his western throne, the sun
Beneath the dark damp caves of ocean sinks!

Son of the harp! obscurity's dim night
Lay heavy on thee; but the struggling fire

That burnt within thy bosom, burst through all
Th' oppressive gloom, and as the morning poura
Her light o'er the wide rosy-mantled skies,
And night, discomfited, retreats before
Her magic beam, which lifts the misty veil
From Nature's face, that the fond sun may view
And worship her beauty, so thy genius broke
In glory on the world, and clearly showed
Thy upward path with thorny roses showered,
That led to Fame's proud temple in the clouds.
Noble enthusiast ! then the chords thy hand
Swept with a master spirit, o'er all hearts
Flinging thy sweet enchantments, and the steep
Won rapidly, despite grim Envy's fiends
And dire Manduci, raised by wizard foes
To fright thee from thy purpose. The high mount
Achieved, thou from its summit viewedst below
A prospect beautiful, sublime, and vast !
But life's low sun was setting on the scene ;
And though tumultuous joy rushed through thy veins
At the fair prospect,—all thy foes subdued,
And toils and troubles past, while music rose
From every forest bower, and hill, and vale,
A hymn of triumph to thy merit due ;
Yet did a softened sadness o'er thee steal,
Dimming thine eye with a regretful tear,
As thou, like Moses on famed Pisgah's top,
Beheld'st that far-off Canaan's beauteous land

Bounded by death's dark flood, o'er which thy foot
Was fated ne'er to pass.—T' th' temple porch
Of burning sapphire now the Peet turned
His anxious gaze, and saw within the hall
Renown upon her sunbright dazzling throne,
Surrounded by a thousand glittering shapes
And thronging radiance. He heard his name
By her pronounced, and saw her blissful smile;
His welcoming heard too the thunder-swell
Of twice ten thousand trumpets:—but the pomp
Floated uncertain in his fading sight:—
He sunk upon the threshold,—and expired!

LETTER CXX.

L.— Cottage.

MY KIND FRIEND,

YOU have now received from me, in the course of a long-continued correspondence, a great number of letters containing most of the principal leading events of my story ;—and a long tedious tale of misery and perpetual disappointment has it been to me. How often have I hoped, and felt but too confident, as fresh and surprising prospects broke upon me, and new friends were raised up, who, pitying my situation, strenuously endeavoured to serve me and turn the tide of relentless fortune, that all my troubles were past ; that permanent comfort, peace, and happiness would shine forth like the evening sun after a day of darkness and storms ; and all be tranquillity and brightness to the close. But I have no longer a hope left, that there can be any substantial comfort or happiness in this life reserved for me. Every new expectation has been blighted in the bud ; every prospect that seemed to dawn upon me in light and beauty has been quickly

overcast with thick clouds of darkness and cruel disappointment !

And such is the fate of a modern bard in this boasted Augustine era of literature,—in this nation, the noblest on earth ! A nation whose ear is open to the voice of misery uttered in the remotest regions of the globe ! whose invincible sword of freedom flashes deliverance to the bond-slave, the captive, and the enthralled wherever Tyranny attempts to rivet her blood-stained fetters ; and whose charitable hand is continually stretched forth in bounty, boundless as the ocean she governs, to relieve the needy and distressed of every people, colour, tongue, and clime ! My miseries, as you well know, have been told in the public ear repeatedly ; but few, very few, have ever deigned to listen to the melancholy tale of private suffering. To those who *have* listened, and cast a benignant eye of pity on me and mine, I fain would publicly offer a poor but lasting tribute,—THE TRIBUTE OF A GRATEFUL HEART,—which will bear the remembrance of their exalted friendship and goodness to the grave. To those of my own County, who possess either influence, riches, or power, with one or two pleasing exceptions, I owe no thanks. Yet some there are in the full enjoyment of wealth and

distinction, who, like the proud Pharisee, have passed by my lowly hermitage with the utmost disdain, lolling in their splendid chariots, utterly regardless, though not ignorant, of my disappointments and my sorrows.

The noble host of literary characters, the light and glory of my country, I foolishly imagined in the ardour of my feelings,* would most certainly have stretched forth the hand of fellowship and patronage, have assisted me to emerge from the shadows of village obscurity, and aided my ascent up the toilsome steep of fame; or at least from a sense of justice and honour, have made known my works to the public by an impartial notice of them in their reviews;—a right to which all authors, I conceive, are entitled, and which all I believe except myself have obtained. But no: my sanguine expectations in this also were doomed to the severest of disappointments. In spite of the lofty ambition of my Muse, in her choice of epic subjects for her themes, the respectable manner in which my poems were published, the earnest and unwearied applications of my friends who had access to literary characters, and the misfortunes I unavoidably laboured

* Vide Letter 71, vol. II.

under, my just claims were resolutely and pertinaciously denied, and my name shut out from all the leading reviews of the day!! ———

“ But in England, the instances of merit,” says the Editor of the *Literary Gazette*, “ totally destitute, are rare; and they are never known but to be patronised. From Stephen Duck down to Clare, there is no instance of a want of public generosity.”* If this be correct, then, it follows that I possess no merit whatever, and consequently have no right to complain. Yet, if I may judge from the very liberal and handsome notice of my first epic poem which appeared in that ably conducted journal, and the manner in which it was recommended to the public in two numbers, the Editor considered that its author *did* possess no inconsiderable share of merit. Be this as it may,—situated as I ever have been, and still am to this hour, I cannot cease to feel, and keenly feel, the treatment I have experienced; and to you I must vent my woes, for I seem, Frank, to have outlived Hope itself.

This world is all a blank to me, and the grave is the only retreat I look to for the sweet period of my sufferings. Yet such has been the won-

* No. 204.

derful Providence,—and I am sure you cannot fail to have remarked it,—which has been exercised towards me through all my eventful pilgrimage, that I trust the darkness of complete despair will never overshadow me again; for I am convinced with St. Pierre, that “there is a species of courage more necessary and more wise than that of self-destruction, which makes us support without witness and without applause the various vexations of life, leaning not upon the opinions of others, but upon the will of God. Patience is the courage of virtue,” and Shakespeare says

“In struggling with misfortunes
Lies the true proof of virtue.”

My misfortunes have always been, alas for me! but too real: my complainings have not arisen from a morbid, nervous irritability; my wants have neither been imaginary nor artificial, nor my sorrows fictitious or ideal. In stating thus much, I am not desirous of attracting undue sympathy from the benevolent; and harbour no thought of extorting something at last like notice and compassion from those persons called reviewers.

There was a time, indeed, when at the sight of a review my heart would leap with hope and

fear : there was a time, when it was in the power of a critic to have poured a flood of unutterable delight and glory o'er the darkness of my path, and made me feel towards him as an Indian towards his sun-god in the season of abundance, or the joyous hour of victory ; not by flattery,—for that I had not the means wherewith to purchase,—but by an honest and candid discharge of his duty, self-enjoined on him, and due to me and the public for whom he professed to be a literary caterer. But that is past. I am soured, disgusted, misanthropic ! The destruction of all my hopes has rendered me callous as the nether millstone ! I neither court applause, nor heed the utmost severity. I am buried deep in the grave of disappointment ; and those who should have kindly led me into light and hope, have heaped oblivion on the ashes of my genius. It cannot blaze again.

“ Neglect has done its worst.—

———Nothing can touch me further.”

My spirits are destroyed, my health impaired, and my expectations blasted ; while the future is all darkness, save that guiding beam of Providence which points to another and a brighter orb, where the tears of misery are wiped away, and

the day of eternal joy succeeds to the gloom and bitterness of the long and wintry night of life.

My dearest friend, I bid you a long farewell. That you may ever escape the misfortunes and buffetings I have had to encounter, I firmly hope and believe. Yet whilst a more fortunate star rules over your destiny, I feel persuaded that your friendship and sympathy will never desert me. Accept the acknowledgments of a grateful and attached heart, and believe me ever to remain

Your truly faithful

SYLVATICUS.

'Tis past ! sweet inspiration like a dream
Of paradise, a sunny beam
Upon a bed of rosy flowers,
At morn and eve's enchanted hours
Came o'er my soul, soothed every care,
And chased the demon of despair :
As from the monarch's troubled bosom fled
The wild fiend, and his viewless wings outspread,
When o'er his lyre the shepherd-minstrel flung
His skilful hand, and warlike legends sung.

'Tis past for ever ! No'er again
Must those rich dreams of light return !
Be dumb, my harp, nor wake the strain
That made my soul with rapture burn !
Silence for ever on thee rest
For darkness dwells within my breast :
Sweet soother of a broken heart,
We must, alas ! for ever part !

'Tis past ! Those visions of delight,
Those cherished hopes of fame so bright,
Of days when misery should cease,
And all be happiness and peace ;
When sorrow should no more intrude,
But laughing joy and friendship sweet
Look in upon my solitude,
And bless my calm retreat.

'Tis past for ever ! Joy, farewell !
Together we must never dwell ;
And folly 'tis with Fate to cope.
I cannot break her iron chain,
Nor banish from my heart this pain,
Then fare thee well, sweet Hope !
Thou soother of a broken heart,
For alas ! we must for ever part !
No friend have I to calm my grief,
No comforter to give relief :
Sweet Friendship dead, and Hope departed,
I sink desponding, broken-hearted !

Adieu, loved harp ! let my last breath
Upon thy golden strings be heard ;
O, let me, as I sink in death,
Like the snow-bosomed bird,
Warble my mournful elegy,
And softly fade in melody ;
Then silence on thee rest for ever,
Thou harp of the luckless bard :
We meet no more ! then never, never
Again be thy sweet voice heard !

THE END.

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